

# **Horizon**

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

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READ & BUTTER AND ARCHITECTURE

*by* JOHN SUMMERSON

MALLARMÉ

*by* RAYMOND MORTIMER

THE WICKED BARONET

*by* LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—III

*by* ARCHIMEDES

MEMORIES OF PAUL KLEE

*by* JANKEL ADLER

REPRODUCTIONS OF PAINTINGS *by* PAUL KLEE

POEMS *by* LAURENCE BINYON, AUDREY BEECHAM  
AND ANNE RIDLER

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# HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. VI No. 34 October 1942

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# COMMENT

THREE years ago *Horizon* was planned, and it is doubtful if any of those concerned would have believed that it would still be in production in the autumn of 1942. Yet now that *Horizon* is an established institution it is beginning to suffer from the atrophy of its years. Superficially all is well: paper trickles in, exports increase, many subscribers renew their subscriptions, and the genteel deficit expected from a literary magazine is maintained without a vulgar lapse into profit, or a disastrous cascade into loss. But otherwise *Horizon* is beginning to feel the effects of the closed hierarchical society in which we live. I wonder how many readers of *Horizon* can understand what it is like to know that however good a magazine one edits were to be, not a single extra copy could be sold, and that, however bad, not a single extra copy would be wasted. Such is the demand of the reading public for anything it can lay its hands on that, were we to print large sections of pre-war Bradshaw upside down, we could still dispose of *Horizon*, and yet were we to offer the first presentation of *In Memoriam* or *Une Saison en enfer* we would be lucky to get one review. Like a provincial noble at Versailles who will always go into dinner a hundred and twentieth, whether he is hungry or not, we exist in that station to which it has pleased the paper controller to call us. This fixed circulation produces a numbing effect, for it means that a good number, or series of good numbers, of *Horizon*, can effect no expansion, and is merely filling in time till the next inevitable paper cut.

Another great difficulty of a magazine in wartime is that as more and more young writers become absorbed in their war work, or as literary cliques are scattered, and even the middle-aged become bowed down under the files of the ministries and the B.B.C., the age of contributors steadily rises. Thus in the present number we have poems by Laurence Binyon, who is seventy, and a sketch by Logan Pearsall Smith, who is seventy-seven. In the last number we began with a poem by Jane Moore who is seventeen. These age-groups have not yet had to register.

This raising of the contributor's age leads to a gradual decay of purpose, for it is only among young writers that movements exist and only movements can hold together a magazine and prevent

it from becoming a shapeless miscellany. At the same time such movements of young writers as have started since the war seem to be more conspicuous for the violence of their attacking power than the depth of their emotions, and to include their efforts on a large scale would be to remove that emphasis on performance, rather than on promise, which it has been the policy of *Horizon* to keep up.

And even now, after these years, there are readers of *Horizon* who still do not know what *Horizon* is about. Thus *Horizon*, which has been called fascist, pacifist, bourgeois, pink, blimpish, and generally subversive, is now being called Communist again. Archimedes, who has been attacked for his Communism in the American paper *Common Sense* (which has incidentally been attacked for its fascism), is considered by many to represent the policy of the paper. The inclusion of Archimedes represents the policy of the paper, his views do not, any more than the Wicked Baronet's views, which are also to be found in this number. *Horizon* is interested in the truth and in the encouragement of art wherever it is to be found; it is 'liberal-bourgeois-intellectual' and proud of it. In this number Archimedes treats us to a chess game. Opening with the origin of life in the universe, he takes us move by move down to the imperious necessity for joining the Communist Party—somewhere in the argument there must be a flaw, or we should all be in the Communists already, but what it is *Horizon* leaves to its readers to point out. Let them set up the board and enjoy this master-play, and remember that the last communist article to be printed in *Horizon* was an attack on us in March 1940.

At the end of this month the *Horizon-La France Libre* edition of Aragon's *Le Crève-Cœur* will be out, with a foreword and introduction by the two editors. This limited edition of seven hundred and fifty copies is already largely subscribed, but copies can still be obtained by writing to *Horizon* or *La France Libre*. *Horizon* will shortly publish articles on *Three Religious Thinkers* by Maud Petre, *Fuseli* by Ruthven Todd, *Hölderlin* by Michael Hambourg, and *Augustus Hare* by Nancy Mitford. Once again we point out that *Horizon* is (to use a word which will soon be as fashionable as euphoric, allergic, etc.) a catalyst, by which young and old, left and right, past and present, home and abroad, are permitted to combine. In a period of transition like the present such a catalyst

is necessary, it is unfortunate that it should also be a period of muddled and petty intolerance, when most people do not know what they believe, only what they dislike. For them, as for the journal *Theology*, *Horizon* must remain 'the English implement of culture-salvage. Sometimes there are good things in its dust-bin.'

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## TAKE YOUR CHOICE

'THIS is our great, last opportunity, the opportunity offered to men at all the great turning-points of history, the opportunity of regeneration through suffering. This is the inmost meaning of the war.'

LORD ELTON, *St. George or the Dragon*

'I HAVE never met in Russia, the country where the inevitability of suffering is preached as the general road to salvation, nor have I ever known of any man anywhere, who hated, loathed and despised all unhappiness, grief and suffering so strongly and deeply as Lenin did. He was particularly great in my opinion precisely because of his burning faith that suffering was not an essential and unavoidable part of life, but an abomination that people ought and could sweep away.'

GORKY on Lenin



LAURENCE BINYON

# THE RUINS:

FIVE POEMS

## I

Now is the time for the burning of the leaves.  
They go to the fire; the nostril pricks with smoke  
Slowly wandering into the weeping mist.  
Brittle and blotched, ragged and rotten sheaves!  
A flame seizes the smouldering ruin, and bites  
On stubborn stalks that crackle as they resist.

The last hollyhock's fallen tower is dust:  
All the spices of June are a bitter reek,  
All the extravagant riches spent and mean.  
All burns! the reddest rose is a ghost.  
Sparks whirl up to expire in the mist, and wild  
Fingers of fire are making corruption clean.

Now is the time for stripping the spirit bare,  
Time for the burning of days ended and done,  
Idle solace of things that have gone before.  
Rootless hope and fruitless desire lie there:  
Let them go to the fire with never a look behind.  
The world that was ours is a world that is ours no more.

They will come again, the leaf and the flower, to arise  
From squalor of rottenness into the old splendour,  
And magical scents to a wondering memory bring,  
The same glory, to shine upon different eyes.  
Earth cares for her own ruins, naught for ours.  
Nothing is certain, only the certain spring.

## II

Never was anything so deserted  
As this dim theatre,

Now that, in passive grayness, the remote  
Morning is here,  
Taming the ghostly sparkle of the half-lit  
Pale chandelier.

Never was anything disenchanted  
As this silence!—  
Gleams of soiled gilding on curved balconies,  
Empty! immense  
Dead crimson curtain, tasselled with its old  
And staled pretence!

Nothing is heard but a shuffling, a knocking  
Of pail and mop:  
Two women there, inconsequently chatting,  
Straighten or stoop,  
And the ancient dust into the shadowy air  
Floats wandering up.

The living voices are gone, the voices  
That laughed and cried.  
It is as if the whole marvel of the world  
Had blankly died,  
Inert as a drowned body, abandoned  
By the ebbing tide.

Beautiful as water, beautiful as fire,  
The voices came;  
They made the eyes to open and the ears to hear,  
The hand to lie intently motionless,  
The heart to flame.  
The radiance of reality was there,  
Splendour and shame.

Slowly an arm dropt, and an empire fell.  
We saw, we knew.  
A head was lifted, and a soul set free.  
Abysses opened into heaven and hell.  
We heard, we drew  
Into our own veins courage of the truth  
That searched us through.



But the voices are all departed,  
The vision dull.  
Daylight disconsolately enters  
Only to annul.  
The vast space is hollow and empty  
As a skull.

## III

Cold springs among black ruins! Who shall say  
Whither or whence they stream?  
If it could be that such translated light  
As comes about a dreamer in his dream—  
And he believes with a belief intense  
What morning will deride—if such a light  
Of neither night nor day  
Nor moon nor sun  
Shone here, it would accord with what it broods upon,—  
Disjected fragments of magnificence!  
A loneliness of light without a sound  
Is shattered on wreckt tower and purpled wall,  
(Fire has been here!)  
On arch and pillar and entablature  
As if arrested in the act to fall.  
Where a home was, is a mis-shapen mound  
Beneath nude rafters. Still,  
Fluent and fresh and pure,  
At their own will  
Amid this lunar desolation glide  
Those living springs, with interrupted gleam,  
As if nothing had died:  
But who will drink of them?

Stooping and feeble, leaning on a stick,  
An old man with his vague feet stirs the dust,  
Searching a strange world for he knows not what  
Among haphazard blocks and crumbled brick.  
He cannot adjust  
What his eyes see to memory's golden land,  
Shut off by the iron curtain of Today:  
The past is all the present he has got.

Now as he bends to peer  
 Into the rubble, he picks up in his hand  
 (Death has been here!)  
 Something, defaced, naked and bruised; a doll,  
 A child's doll, blankly smiling with wide eyes  
 And O how human in its helplessness!  
 Pondered in weak fingers,  
 He holds it, puzzled; wondering, where is she,  
 The small mother,  
 Whose pleasure was to clothe it and caress,  
 Who hugged it with a motherhood foreknown,  
 Who ran to comfort its imagined cries,  
 And gave it pretty sorrows for its own?  
 No one replies.

## IV

Beautiful, wearied head,  
 Bent back against the up-thrown arm behind,  
 Why are your eyes closed? Is it that they fear  
 Sight of these vast horizons shuddering red  
 And coming near, and near?  
 Godlike shape, would you be blind  
 Rather than see the young leaves falling dead  
 On blasts of a foul wind  
 All round you, as if, O disinherited!  
 The world that you had willed  
 Since upon earth laughter and grief began  
 Should only in final mockery rebuild  
 A palace for the proudest ruin, Man?

Or are those eyes closed for the inward eye  
 To see, beyond the tortures of today  
 The hills of hope serene in liquid light  
 Of reappearing sky—  
 This black fume and miasma rolled away?  
 Yet O how far thought spurs the onward sight!  
 The unforeshortened vision opens vast,  
 Hill beyond hill, year upon year amassed,  
 Age beyond age, and still the hills ascend,  
 Height over farthest height,

Though each has seemed (but only seemed) the last,  
 And still appears no end,  
 No end, but all an upward path to climb,  
 To conquer, at what cost!  
 Labouring on, to be lost  
 On the mountains of Time.

What are they burning, what are they burning,  
 Heaping and burning in the thunder-gloom?  
 Rubbish of the old world, dead things, merely names,  
 Truth, justice, love, beauty, the human smile,—  
 All flung to the flames!

They are raging to destroy, but first defile,  
 Maddened because no furnace will consume  
 What lives, still lives, impassioned to create.

Ah, your eyes open; open and dilate.

Transfigured, you behold

The Python that had coiled about your feet,  
 Muscle on muscle, in slow malignant fold,  
 Tower now and tauten, impending opposite—

A fury of greed, an ecstasy of hate

Concentred in the small and angry eye.

Your hand leaps out in the action to defy,

And grips the unclean throat, to strangle it.

## V

From shadow to shadow the waters are gliding, are gone.  
 They mirror the ruins a moment, the wounds and the void;  
 But theirs is the sweetness of silence in places apart;  
 They retain not a stain, in a moment they shine as they shone,  
 They stay not for bound or for bar; they have found out a way  
 Far from the gnawing of greed, from the envious heart.

The freshness of leaves is from them, and the springing of grass.

The juice of the apple, the rustle of ripening corn.

They know not the lust of destruction, the frenzies of spite.

They give and pervade, nor possess, but silently pass.

They perish not, though they be broken; continuing streams,

The same in the cloud and the glory, the night and the light.



AUDREY BEECHAM

## SEA-SCAPE

I, land-locked and dry, wish back once more  
Foreground of surge like ginger beer;  
Pebbles beneath the crunch which sigh  
Smells of the sea decayed on shore—  
Dead fish and salt smell—seaweed parched,  
And insect crabs scorched in the hand;  
The seagull's heavy-bodied fall  
From curve to vertical swoop to prey,  
Its sated hunch on the clear sea wall  
Sun-dry of tears from the frustrate spray;  
And rusty desolate piles which march  
Across the sea-scape into the sky.

ANNE RIDLER

## KIRKWALL 1942

Far again, far,  
And the Pentland howling psalms of separation  
Lifts and falls, lifts and falls between.  
But present pain  
Folds like a firth round islets that contain  
A sheepfold and a single habitation—  
Moments in our summer of success—  
Or the greater islands, colonized and built with peace.

Cold knives of light  
Make every outline clear in a northern island,  
The separating light, the sea's green;  
Yet southern lives  
Merge in the lupin fields or sleepy coves,  
In crowstepped gables find a hint of Holland,  
And Europe in the red religious stone:  
All places in the room where we in love lie down.

JOHN SUMMERSON

## BREAD & BUTTER AND ARCHITECTURE

ST before the war, the profession of architecture—or that relatively small part of it which has eyes in front of its head as well as at the back—passed through a critical and self-conscious phase. Vital matters came right to the surface of professional life. The profession grew. And with a vigorous twist new and important—and, I believe, hopeful—potentialities came to light.

Perhaps the clearest way to present the resulting picture is to begin by comparing the point of view of a student leaving an architectural school in, say, 1925, with one leaving in 1938. In 1925 the prospect looked something like this. You passed your final examination and entered the office of an F.R.I.B.A. at £3 or £4 a week. In two or three years it might become £7, in ten years £12; then, perhaps a partnership. But, with luck you would not have to wait for that. An uncle or friend (pigmy shade of the eighteenth-century patron) would step in with a commission—perhaps a £1,000 house. From this you ‘worked up a practice’. You put up a brass plate. You won a competition or two. You made good.

At least, that was the idea and the ideal—to be a successful independent practitioner of architecture, a scholar and a gentleman (like Wren, in Kneller’s portrait) with clients in the aristocracy, the City and the Church. But of course it did not work out quite like that. Big country-house practices and Church practices had crumpled up in 1914–16; the biggest commercial work was firmly clutched by old-established firms with many partners. Still, there were the smaller houses, small factories, suburban churches, and the continual rebuildings in London and the provinces. And one hoped.

Now jump to 1938. The student of that year took a different view. Behind him was the depression of 1929–31, an event which had caused the vista of private practice to shrink horribly and any glamour it had retained to become very dim. The 1935 student had a tougher prospect before him, and unless his parents could

supply a resilient background, he had to be more of a realist. It was almost fanciful to pursue the brass-plate ideal, though it might be precariously achieved by a group of friends tacking half-a-dozen modest plates under a single bell-push. But there was an alternative—permanent salaried employment.

Now, salaried employment—except as a mere transition to independence—was, in 1925, a proposition which attracted few and was entertained by the unambitious and the not very talented. There were respectable opportunities in the civil service, but even these were not keenly contested. Employment on the staff of a local authority or, worse, a commercial undertaking (say a chain store) was sought only by those to whom the pay-envelope was a very much more urgent consideration than opportunities for the creation of architecture.

By 1935, however, salaried employment as an alternative to private practice demanded to be taken seriously. And it was. Between that year and the beginning of the war there was a rapid swing-round from the complacent, deprecatory view just indicated to lively interest and, positively, enthusiasm. The reasons were not only economic, and some of them are worth explaining. One of the chief reasons I would put down as the spread of 'Left' views among the younger part of the profession. These developed not from any deep preoccupation with politics but from the discovery of Continental 'functionalism' (as it was then called) which began to be widely studied here about 1927, eight years after the publication of le Corbusier's *Vers une Architecture*. The first incentive was psychological—the novelty, strange beauty and allure of foreign architectural experiment. The exploration and mastery of these led to a wider conception of what architecture is, of its relation to siting, to town-planning and thus to sociology and more remotely to politics: then, from politics back to sociology and the sociological position of the architect himself. One does not need to be particularly 'Left', or indeed politically minded at all, to appreciate that the architectural opportunities of the future are more likely to lie in the hands of administrative authorities and commercial corporations (whether publicly or privately controlled) than in the hands of any private individuals whatever; or to appreciate the many excellent reasons for such bodies having permanent architectural departments of their own. But a full-blooded 'Left' interpretation



f such a future is exciting. It caught the imagination of many young architects of 1935 to 1938.

It was in the former year, 1935, that the great housing and slum clearance drive started up. Local authorities had to shoulder big architectural responsibilities and most of them were ridiculously ill-equipped for the job. But against the background of mediocrity and worse a few signposts stood out. There was the intelligent and imaginative office of L. H. Keay, Liverpool's Housing Director, where schemes for ironing out and replanning areas as big as fifty acres were being prepared. And there was A. H. Livett, doing pioneer work as Leeds' Housing Director on the big Quarry Hill Estate in that black city. About the same time one began to hear of the architectural department of the Miners' Welfare Commission, admirably run by J. H. Forshaw.<sup>1</sup> Here each job (they were mostly pit-head baths) was put in charge of a senior assistant with a small team under him—an arrangement very different from the usual haphazard distribution of hack-work among 'temporary' employees and the responsibility (nominal of course) of the chief for all designs.

To such offices as these, young A.R.I.B.A.s began to turn for those three essential things for any born architect—bread, butter, and the opportunity to build.

This change of opinion was, as I have said, pretty rapid and by September 1939 its resultant thrusts were making themselves shrewdly felt—especially inside the walls of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Now the Royal Institute is, in origin, a learned Society and retains much of the traditional conservatism of such. For 107 years it has upheld the ideal of the independent artist-constructor-business-man acting in a fiduciary relationship to his client. Its membership and council show a large predominance of private practitioners; its external policy and energies have been chiefly directed to persuading the 'building public' to employ qualified architects, with an unconscious emphasis on their independent status. The Institute has never interested itself much in the status of the departmental principal, all less in that of the 'salaried' man in a humbler position, who nevertheless has earned the Associateship of the Institute, and is,

<sup>1</sup> Forshaw's success here was followed by his appointment about three years ago to the senior post in the L.C.C.'s architectural department.

educationally, often better equipped than his chief. Lately, however, these two elements in the R.I.B.A.'s membership have been vocal, not to say truculent. When, in 1938, a President distinguished for his learning and eloquence referred lightly to departmental architecture as 'stale chocolate' there was a volcanic row. County architects, city architects, the chief architects to towns and that, were wounded and indignant. And it is just possible that what wounded them most was that the terrible phrase was not entirely without point. Few of these men could get outside themselves sufficiently to be self-critical or to share the more philosophic confidence of some of their juniors in the future of departmental as against private practice. Not all of them could see that, while tradition and circumstance favoured the individual rich client with his private architect, 'official' architecture was very liable indeed to be stale. On the other hand, what the President evidently could not see was that 'official' architecture *need not be* either as second-hand or as tepid as his simile implied nor, for that matter, did he see that the scales had already turned which would bring the brains and enthusiasm of the young down on the side of the departments.

From the 'salaried' camp came altogether tougher and less emotional criticism. Their prime objectives were to coerce the Institute into active leadership in architectural policy *vis-à-vis* the government (an impossible proposition for a 'learned Society') and (more reasonably) to direct the Institute's prestige towards getting better pay and working conditions for salaried architects of all kinds. The policy represented here issued chiefly from a body with an undeservedly dim and cumbersome designation—the Association of Architects, Surveyors and Technical Assistants. It is a remarkable body, this A.A.S.T.A. Not long ago it was plodding along in the background with a mild up-with-the-under-dog policy. But the crisis of the 1930's infused it with vitality. It identified itself with the changed point of view which I outlined at the beginning of this article. It greatly enlarged its membership. It flushed a deep political colour. Before and during the first year of the war it conducted research into emergency building technique (shelters, evacuation camps, etc.) and produced a remarkable literature of reports and recommendations. In many respects the A.A.S.T.A. has come to fill the rôle originally (1931) proposed by the M.A.R.S. (Modern Architectural Research)

Group, but which that round-table of architectural highbrows was too supine and introvert to perform. Today, the A.A.S.T.A. represents in the most clear-cut fashion the Left wing of architecture. And it has gone further by establishing a specific relation to the building industry and becoming affiliated to the T.U.C.

From some points of view the A.A.S.T.A. may be regarded as an adumbration of what the Royal Institute itself may, one of these days, have to become. For, since the passing of the Architects (Registration) Act in 1938, closing the profession and protecting the title 'Architect', the Institute's position has become rather curious. It has voluntarily and deliberately and, in fact, by its own strenuous efforts surrendered its unique position as the body granting the highest architectural degrees to a statutory Registration Council. By this Act of surrender the Institute has prescribed its own educational standards for the entire profession, but at the same time has placed itself under the obligation to serve its members in ways substantial enough to make their subscriptions worth while. It cannot live indefinitely on prestige and the services of a superb library. It will have to promote the interests not merely of 'architecture' (as laid down in the Charter of 1835) but of architects; it will have to conduct an active policy aimed at identifying a highly-trained profession with every building activity in the country. From the 'learned society' condition of its origin it will have to develop into something rather like a Trade Union and at the same time, perhaps, become a centre of, or at any rate the mouthpiece for, technical research.

Enough of professional 'shop', which is not, perhaps, very interesting to the non-architect except in so far as it shows an important twist in opinion which is likely to change and clarify the relation of the architect to the public. I am not going to suggest that the private practitioner is to die out or that all architecture will be purveyed by public or semi-public departments. The individualist free-lance will still play an important part. More generally, the tendency will be for big private firms to become even bigger and to absorb structural engineers and quantity surveyors into their staffs, becoming, as it were, full-blown free-lance 'departments'.

In both official and private offices the absorption of engineering and other specialized technical skill is inevitable and necessary. For specialization has become formidable. The architect who has



to work with a variety of consultants and with a quantity surveyor (to say nothing of the army of specialized sub-contractors embraced by a big contract) to each of whom separately his client is under a contractual obligation is in an increasingly strange position. Is he an artist, a business-man, an administrator or what? It was possible to think, thirty or forty years ago, that he could be all three. But even if he can make shift to carry on a practice of this kind (and there are architects who do it astoundingly well) it is doubtful if the principle is one which can be upheld as a sound basis of future professional organization. America long ago developed the fully-equipped architectural firm with its separate staffs of planners, designers of façades, engineers, surveyors and so on, all working under immense pressure to produce the slick marketable result. The method proved its efficiency though it is not precisely the model to be followed in the lay-out of an architectural department from which imaginative work and a decent working career for its personnel are to be expected. But the 'all-in' office, well laid out, with a man at the head who is not necessarily a brilliant designer but knows enough about everything to run the show, is the pattern most likely to form in the future both in the 'official' and 'private' fields. In the 'official' field it is already crystallizing.<sup>1</sup>

The proportion of building work which, before the war, was handled by architectural departments was very big indeed—much bigger than one would guess from a glance at, say, the architectural room at the Royal Academy, or even the discerning pages of the *Architectural Review*. After the war, it will no doubt be found that the departments have survived better than many private practices. Just how much of the burden of reconstruction they will carry will depend on how expenditure on building will be controlled and canalized. At present, there is no hint of an answer to the question, but some probabilities are clear enough.

Housing in the bombed and (what is more to the point) architecturally obsolescent industrial towns will take precedence in the reconstruction programme. Offices like those I mentioned at Liverpool and Leeds and to which I would add E. A. A. Gibson's

<sup>1</sup> Here and elsewhere in this article, readers of Mr. Dennis Routh's contribution to the September number of *Horizon* ('The Twentieth Century Revolution') will recognise a particular situation related to the general picture sketched by Mr. Routh.

comparatively new and very successful department at Coventry, will have big programmes before them. They will recruit some of the best architectural ability released from the forces. If anything resembling the recommendations of the Uthwatt report are by then adopted, their opportunities will be substantial. They will rise to them, and we shall get some real architecture.

But what of the other towns? Few have well-developed architects' departments. In some the only architects employed are junior assistants in the office of the Borough Engineer. Here one of several things may happen. Either architectural departments will be rapidly set up, or the Borough Engineer will solve the problems in his own way, with the help of an architecturally reinforced staff; or private architects will receive parcels of work, to be co-ordinated under the Engineer. There may be some pressure in favour of this latter course, but I doubt whether it will be encouraged by local authorities themselves. As I see it, the large towns will go all out for big unified schemes for housing, school-building and hospital-building carried out by the official architects of the housing, education and health committees. The smaller towns will compromise between methods, with variable measures of success.

Local authorities are not the only bodies whose architects will make a big hand in post-war building. There are the railways, whose architectural tradition just touches the Georgian Age but lost itself in 'practical man's' makeshift engineering and has shown few convincing signs of recovery. The Southern built competent stations between the wars; and the L.M.S. recently showed sense and foresight in appointing the young head of a successful school of architecture to a responsible post. The railways can contribute any amount to the re-civilizing of urban and rural Britain if only they will come off the idea that only luxury hotels and the façades to metropolitan termini need architectural thought. Before them is the shining example of Frank Pick and his Underground. It is hard to exaggerate how much a well-organized railway architect's department with a reasonably far-sighted Board behind it and its doors wide open to ambition and ability could do for us.

Banks have their architects' departments (competent but painfully conservative) and the Ministry of Works handles (with

unimpeachable tact) all post-offices and telephone exchanges. Then there are the chain stores. It has been their unacknowledged privilege to transform every High Street in the country and present us with what is nothing more nor less than a standardized shopping-centre, whose mock-imposing silhouettes and ghastly fascias leer at the Saturday shopping-crowds with the leer of a Jew capitalist in a Nazi cartoon. The output, generally, is bad. But there are exceptions and there is hope; I heard lately, for instance, of a good appointment made by one of the big dairy combines. The Co-op. architects, too, have done work above the average.

The field of opportunity within the grasp of the official architect is immense. If we are to think of the architectural future in terms of the rebuilding of towns he is bound to take a big place in the picture. This does not mean that the picture is rosy all at once. 'Stale chocolate' and, in fact, stinking rubbish have come out of dreary departments and petty maintenance-cum-storefitted offices in the very recent past. Big business knows what the public will put up with, knows how to stamp its ugly autograph on the face of every town with a population over 10,000, and will only learn with difficulty that to put one brick on another in this island is a privilege and a responsibility.

The fact that the best type of architect has not, hitherto, been enlisted in the chief sources of architectural output is proved by a glance at the centre or suburbs of any town. The shops, the pubs, the big bold cinemas, the tonic banks, the housing estates, the schools, the hospitals—a high proportion of all these are the work of the architectural 'salaried'. And a high proportion are not a quarter as good as they ought to be. Architecture worth looking at, living in and working in is nearly always by a man in private practice, sometimes engaged on a job handed out to him for purposes of prestige or by competition over the heads of an official department. But this does not prove that the conditions of private practice make for better architecture. It only proves that the departments—often poorly organized and badly paid—do not attract the best brains.

The development of the architectural department has been stealthy and obscure. Only now has its full extent and significance begun to dawn on architects and this chiefly because opportunities and even livelihood on the old lines offer, for the young, a child



respect. The alternative, if it is to benefit architects and public alike, needs energetic pioneer work. What one hopes for is initiative from the profession itself (will the R.I.B.A. do it, or leave it to the A.A.S.T.A.?) to press for a standard of organization and working conditions in architectural departments so that a sense of individual responsibility is retained, so that the slur on 'unalarmed' practice is wiped out once and for all and so that the immense mass of trained ability and enthusiasm now locked up in the forces (a little suspicious, probably, of the 'great era of reconstruction to which we look forward') can be given the chance it deserves. For we must remember that, although when Registration sealed up the profession, large numbers of men were admitted who are architects by force of habit rather than by training, the *young* architect of today is highly trained. If he is given a reasonable chance there is no earthly reason why English architecture should not climb very high very quickly.

And now, to extend the story in a specially interesting direction, what *kind* of architecture is likely to come out of the situation I have just analysed? The main facts from which an answer can be extracted seem to me to be these. The generation of architects which fits most naturally into the picture is the one which matured between the two wars—average age now, say, thirty-eight. This generation is largely school-trained, has very little, if any, loyalty to the grandees of the preceding generation and has formed itself partly on a definite 'line' adopted by one school or another, and partly on its own reaction to what has been going on in European architecture. The impress of school training is often very strong. The American influence at the Liverpool School, for instance, modified by the vogue for Swedish sentiment, can be traced in dozens of recent buildings. At the same time there is nothing in the Schools approaching an 'academic tradition'—using that phrase in the sense of a strict stylistic discipline. In his fourth or fifth year the ordinary student is already an addict of architectural journalism. His designs take their colour from the pages of the *Review*, the *Journal*, the *Architect* and half a dozen other periodicals; or from the shiny quartos on le Corbusier and Frank Lloyd Wright. He is always out to ring the last bell rung by a great name (1925, Ostberg; 1930, Dudok; 1935, le Corbusier). Later on he settles down to something not quite as adventurous as his thesis design but not as

cautious as the average of new buildings he sees around him. How dreary this sounds! How damning it would be if said of painters and poets! But this seems to be the way that a tradition of competence and quality in architecture comes along.

It is competence and quality we need most at the moment, not the vanity of trying to fly level with the poet-innovator Le Corbusier, or the stupidity (as it seems to me) of being more interested in getting a few exciting, immaculate, individual results than in getting the roots of architecture untangled and properly planted in the soil where they belong.

To go further with the question of style, how 'modern' architecture likely to be under the post-war conditions envisaged? The architect who wants to be 'modern'—a term by which I understand an objectivity of method not necessarily limited by previous results, technical or æsthetic—has to fight two battles. One against public and official prejudice. And one against the building industry. The first is very difficult to fight because 'modern' architecture simply cannot make a direct appeal to the barely existent susceptibilities of the ordinary layman, who as a rule cordially detests it: architecture which stands or falls (figuratively) by an organic unity of siting, plan, elevation and section is as 'obscure' as some modern poetry. The second battle is difficult because the building industry is a great, lumbering tradition-ridden machine with an extraordinarily stiff resistance to the use of new materials unless they can be induced to conform to existing methods. The industry is enormous and composed of endless interlocking units. It is the traditional industry of *excellence* and even to visualize it coming under the sway of co-ordinated research is difficult. There are vested interests reaching into the building materials and engineering industries and the conservatism of method on the labour side is as firmly entrenched.

For these reasons, a regression from the most advanced outposts reached by, say, Tecton ('High-point' flats), Maxwell Fry (Hostel for Girls, Gower Street) or Wells Coates (Palace Gate flats) seems likely in any post-war building effort. Interest will centre in evolving a type of design incorporating many accepted formulae of planning and finish but more flexible than anything which there could have been before the onset of the 'modern' movement between the wars. There is, however, one possibility



Public Library Extension, Scarborough, 1935

CLUBBERATIVE  
HOUSE

RESTAURANT



special interest. In very big schemes under unified control (such, for instance, as local authority housing or school schemes), prefabrication might be of enormous value. There is evidence for this in the use of the Mopin system on the Quarry Hill Estate at Leeds, and there is just the chance that the idea of prefabricating units of structure and equipment may link up with the vast problem of demobilizing war industry and labour. But I do not know. I only mention it as a much-discussed possibility. In any case, I would hazard that prefabrication, in the present state of experience, would tend rather to conservatism in design (the repetition of units gives a hint in the direction of the Auguste Perret kind of classical modernity) than to any æsthetic adventures.

Altogether, it seems to me that the high fliers—the Lloyd Wrights and the Corbusiers and their satellites—have broken as many barriers as needed breaking for the present. They have liberated architecture and equipped it for all the real-life adventures which are looming ahead. The next thing to be done is to render architecture *effective* in English life; to link it firmly on the one hand with the many phases of national planning in which building has a place, and on the other with the architect's education and employment and the well-ordering of a profession which is, on the whole, idealistic, self-critical, and ambitious to seize the opportunities which must eventually follow the disasters of today.

#### NOTE ON THE ILLUSTRATIONS

The Co-operative Wholesale Society's Store at Huddersfield (1937) is good shop architecture and good street architecture, in striking contrast with the generally low level of work turned out by the architectural offices of chain stores. The design comes from the C.W.S. architect's department at Manchester, where the principal is W. A. Johnson, F.R.I.B.A. The assistant in charge was J. W. Cropper, L.R.I.B.A.

The Public Library extension at Scarborough (1935) illustrates one kind of opportunity which comes within the sphere of salaried designers employed by local authorities. It is the work of G. W. Alderson, A.R.I.B.A., in his capacity as architect to the Borough Engineer, J. Paton Watson, M.Inst. C.E. This interior is notable for its excellent lay-out and good finish.

# LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

## THE WICKED BARONET

I HAVE remarked elsewhere how many Victorian types have perished: the Permanent Invalid, the Angel Child, the Dear Old Lady in her caps and laces, the Fallen Daughter, the Aesthete, the Fop, the Wicked Baronet, famous for his seductions of the modest Village Maiden,—another type that has become long since a fleeting shade, they say.

I once met—it must have been fifty years ago—a Wicked Baronet, perhaps the last survivor of his species. He was a Baronet anyhow, of an old creation—a Nova Scotia Baronet, which is, I am told, the most exclusive kind of all. Sir Peregrine Coucher, of Coucher Abbey in Cheshire, was his name. He was a Captain in the Coldstream Guards. Being, as I had every right by my transatlantic birth to be, a snob, and not knowing, as I have learned since, that Baronets are not aristocrats, I was pleased to be introduced to this nobleman as I thought him, and interested to meet, moreover, a trousered tiger, since in American society soldiers do not mix. I dared to ask if he would give me an interview; for I had become a sort of amateur journalist when I reached the shores of England, and I had prepared a list of inquiries I would put to my new acquaintances. There they proved to be willing, and ever eager to answer: English people of all ranks like, I found, to talk about themselves. Not the least eager was Sir Coucher, as in my ignorance, I called him. He asked me to his London mansion where he received me in his library naked; for, though no longer young, he seemed proud of his personal appearance. I was invited to visit him at his home in Cheshire, to which old Abbey I found he had restored as much as possible its monastic appearance. For though, as he liked to boast, his sins had been, ever since his early days at Eton, scarlet, Sir Peregrine was a deeply religious man. All there was to sit on in this Abbey were hard straight-back settees of the most austere character; very uncomfortable I found them to that part of the person which, I had been told, the Lord Chancellor usually places on the Woolsack. Still more painful seemed her situation to a large lady of Israelitic appearance on another settee, whom I took to be this lady-killer

most recent victim. 'Lady Pott—immensely rich—a great Jewish fortune,' he whispered, as he showed me to my room. 'She hates sitting on these wooden seats; but it's Lent, I tell her, and anyhow it's a penance for the sin of overeating, which by the way she can't indulge in here. I am only afraid she will come out in spots, as she has done before. She might kick the bucket any day, which would be very sad, of course. She hasn't any children though, and it's a great fortune and she can leave it to, well—to anyone she likes. But don't let's talk of this. What are the questions you want to ask me? Let's get on with that. Do I ever think of the world as a whole? I don't know what you mean. As to human nature, save for a few friends, I think it disgusting. I hate the mass of human nature, and have no sympathy with it or its feelings.

'Russia is the ideal of government according to me. No one should have liberty to say anything against faith or morals. If a book were published with heresy in it, the author should be heavily fined for the first offence, pilloried and branded for the second, and for the third should be imprisoned for an enormous term. No one should be allowed even to talk against the Church. Civil power should be entirely in the hands of the people of property, but landlords should be carefully watched, and severely punished for any neglect of duty. These are really my ideas: I have thought them out for myself; I don't know whether other people agree with me; I never listen to what people say on politics, or read political articles or speeches, as it makes me ill if I don't agree. I have no sympathy with the Tory Party in England: they seem to me rotten. Sometimes I take the chair, however, at political meetings, because I think it goes well with my position. I am not patriotic; I don't care much, so long as the Church advances. I am good, and I believe, a popular landlord—I see to it myself that everything is kept in good condition. I would do a great deal to make my own tenants and people at home happy. I like them, just as I like bric-à-brac; they are a part of me, as it were. In nature like undulating plains, and distant hills, and everything bathed in sunlight. I like mid-summer, or mid-winter; the spring I loathe; the beastly trees coming into blossom,—it seems silly, I loathe it.

'In literature I never read poetry except Swinburne, Rossetti, Longfellow, Lewis Morris. I hate love stories, and think them disgusting. French novels I hate. You always read about *sa nuque adorable*; I think it disgusting. I love Thackeray; and Ouida; she

comforts me. The three books that I always have with me, and by my bed, and can pick up and read at any moment, are *The Princess Napraxine*, the *Imitatio Christi*, and *As in a Looking Glass*. I like history; and am fond of reading of the times just before the falls of empires. Napoleon has a sort of satanic fascination for me though I am really more interested in Napoleon III. I like to read religious literature, St. Francis of Assisi, St. Francis of Sales, St. Dominic and St. Theresa. Then the Oxford Movement. I love Newman, oh very much, but not Keble or Pusey. I'm not a Papist, of course—rather too obvious, don't you think?

'I have two fads, buying bric-à-brac, and arranging Church functions. In London I am always busy, going about. And I always dine out; and then go to evening parties and balls, often three parties in an evening, getting home at two or three o'clock. Do I enjoy it? No! I did once, when I was quite young, and now it has become a habit. Then I love a good dinner, and hate dining alone. But I don't like the people I meet, or take any interest in them. My natural impulse would be to say, "piggish beasts, I hate you all!" They seem to me stinking and wretched really.

'I have no ambitions, my ideal is to reign and rule over my own people; to be a little King in the country. I like and enjoy my position, *ça donne bien dans le paysage*. Now that's', he cried with enthusiasm, as he paused to taste for the first time in his life the joy of introspection, 'now that's the real secret of my life! I think of everything in regard to how it fits in with my picture of what ought to be. I see myself dressed in cloth of gold, against an azure blue background—but bright, bright blue.

'I don't care for the opinion of my own class, though I must have consideration from those below me. If anyone, a Duke, say, in my neighbourhood, gave a party, and didn't ask me, I should not feel hurt, though I should be angry, and think him a devilish fool and a rude snob. But if some one on my own place didn't touch his hat to me, I should be miserable for a week.

'Do I admire myself! No; not from a moral point of view: I'm a miserable sinner, of course. But I don't regret that I am what I am. The older I get, the more I enjoy life. I am quite happy, not absolutely, of course: there is always the crumpled rose. My principal fault is pride, extreme haughtiness; but I never try to alter it. The older I get the more self-centred I am. I don't find anything strange in life, or in my own existence. It only seems strange



to me when I am ill, or cannot get what I want. That always seems to me very strange and wrong. Sense of duty to the world! What are you talking about? Honestly, I don't know what you mean. To do something for the world in return for its support of me? No! Why I'm here!

Well, there he was, and here is his account of his thoughts and feelings as I noted them down from his own lips, nearly fifty years ago. At this account he would gaze and gaze again as at a flattering image of himself in a mirror. 'But mind,' he warned me, 'if this is ever published, it must not be published with my name—whilst I am alive at least. Some people wouldn't ask me to dinner if they read it, and I hate dining alone, as I told you.'

Sir Peregrine Coucher died *s.p.*, as they say in the Baronetage, some years ago, a long time after the decease of Lady Pott. Before I read in *The Times* of the fortune she bequeathed to the owner of Coucher Abbey, I used to receive every Christmas an uninscribed volume of erotic verse, expressing boundless admiration for the person, and unbridled longing for the embraces, of a shepherd she called 'Peregrinaos', in a not quite undecipherable disguise. Did Lady Pott send me these exquisitely-printed little volumes—or was it perhaps the proud Sir Peregrine himself? I could not thank him without knowing. I cannot thank him now. For years he must have been dining with Persephone in Hades, or more likely, among the highest saintly Circles which have been so well described in his *Paradise* by the most famous society-writer of the Middle Ages. For, Sir Coucher was, as I have said, a deeply religious man.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

MALLARMÉ

UNDEFATIGABLY distilling essences and intrincating spells, living in poetry as the saints have sought to live in God, Mallarmé, to the esthete a hierophant, to the philistine a *reductio ad absurdum*, has been dead less than fifty years and is already a myth. The simplicity of his life is no less remarkable than the abstruseness

and rarity of his writings. The other great French poets of his century made themselves vivid by public energy or personal eccentricity, Lamartine in the February Revolution, Hugo hurling chastisements from his island exile, Musset tossed by turbulent amours, Nerval hanging himself top-hatted from a lamp-post, Baudelaire enslaved simultaneously by his mother by drugs and by an angry drab, Verlaine reeling between the confessional and the lupanar, Rimbaud ruthlessly discarding his genius to trade in Ethiopian slaves—each is rich in the idiosyncrasies that edify a legend. Then, by their side, a schoolmaster, just not too inefficient to keep his job, his poverty genteel rather than picturesque, is seen alternating between his class-room and the poky flat where his wife and daughter darn in the lamplight. Mallarmé's imagination never spilled into the disorder of deeds; it was decanted, with superlative caution, into the crystal of language.

A Life of Mallarmé, in over eight hundred pages, has recently been published in Paris by the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. The author, M. Henri Mondor, who is a painter as well as a writer, has for years been collecting manuscripts, letters and other sorts of Mallarmeana. He rarely seeks to provide literary criticism or exegesis, but as biography the book seems definitive, and all the new material in this essay derives from M. Mondor's intelligent industry.

Etienne Mallarmé—called Stéphane from his earliest years—was born in Paris on 18 March 1842. His ancestors came from Burgundy, Lorraine and Holland. His father and both his grandfathers were Civil Servants. His mother died when he was a child, his father remarried, and the boy was brought up by a devoted, pious and fussy grandmother. He did not distinguish himself at his lessons, and passed his matric. only at a second attempt. But at his school at Sens one of the masters was a young poet called des Essarts, who knew Hugo, Gautier and Baudelaire. The boy made friends with him, and thus came to know Henri Cazalis, who later wrote good verse under the name of Jean Lahor and who was the first to recognize in Mallarmé a poet of genius. At the age of twenty he was already writing sumptuous verse in the manner of Baudelaire, when he fell in love with a fair, unhappy-looking girl he saw in the street. She was a German governess, Marie Gerhard. He went to London, hav-

decided to be a schoolmaster rather than a Civil Servant, and took her with him. There were agitations, indecisions about marriage, desperate partings. 'Longtemps nous avons agité nos mouchoirs, et, quand je n'ai plus vu le sien, j'ai sangloté à travers les rues. Je sens que je ne la reverrai jamais.' This is one of the very few personal incidents I can find reflected in the poetry:

Un ennui, désolé par les cruels espoirs,

Croit encore à l'adieu suprême des mouchoirs. . . .

The farewell, in fact, was not final, and Mallarmé married Marie at the Oratory in London in 1863. He returned to France armed with a teacher's diploma in English, and obtained a post at the *lycée* of Tournon, not far from Valence. The salary was 2,200 francs (£48) a year—and his daughter, Geneviève, was born a year later. He was moved in 1866 to Besançon, in 1867 to Avignon, in 1871 to Paris, where he found the congenial friendship of painters and other poets. He continued to be a schoolmaster in the capital till 1893, when he retired with a pension. He died in 1898.

Mallarmé detested teaching, and on several occasions incurred the censure of his superiors. The headmaster, for instance, of the *lycée* Fontanes in Paris somehow came across his writings: 'productions insensées, en prose et en vers', he decided; and added 'Ceux qui lisent ces étranges élucubrations du cerveau de M. Mallarmé doivent s'étonner qu'il occupe une chaire au lycée Fontanes.' The boys also found the poet easy game; thus on the blackboard one day he found written up in mockery one of his lines:

*Je suis hanté! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur! L'Azur!*

We get a glimpse of him teaching his class 'Twinkle, twinkle little star' and treating them to an excursion on English food—the Queen Mab's pudding, le Wyvern pudding, le Porcupine pudding.' How far his knowledge of English extended has been a matter of dispute. His disciple Francis Viélé-Griffin, an American by birth, helped him to translate Whistler's *Ten O'clock*. I was told by him that Mallarmé's English was far from complete; he thought, for instance, that a pigeonhole meant a dovecote. Apart from Poe, to whom he, like Baudelaire, attached an importance that is difficult to understand, the only English authors to whom I have found a reference in his writings are Shakespeare, Beckford, Hazlitt, Tennyson, Pater and Whistler. Swinburne

corresponded with him, and submitted his French verses to him for correction. Whether Mallarmé knew the work of Donne, for instance, or Blake, or Browning, I cannot determine.

Odious as was the daily treadmill of the classroom, Mallarmé preferred it to the profanation entailed, in his opinion, by journalism. He wrote occasionally for foreign periodicals, such as *The Athenæum*; he even edited for a few months a fashion-paper, but in his note on millinery he did not deviate very far from his customary style:

Le chapeau, c'est bien autre chose! Voilà du velours et de la soie, voilà du feutre ou une forme (qui n'est souvent que l'absence même de forme) et je puis vous parler une heure; faites de tout celà quelque chose, même avec des fleurs, des plumes et mes paroles. . . .

In a series of lectures he once gave in Belgium he made even less concession to his audiences. 'Un homme, au rêve habitué', he began, 'vient ici vous parler d'un autre, qui est mort'. Then he celebrated the genius of Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, in such terms as these:

A la suite d'un de ces abords subits sur le trottoir, bris ains qu'un vitre, d'où s'écroulait la joaillerie, le ton, nul l'oublier comme si c'était étrange, et contraire ou oiseux, qu'il vécût dont on disait, se prenant à part, entre le six ou sept que nous fûmes à le connaître; 'J'ai vu Villiers!'

The audience, he reported in a letter to his daughter, was stunned but subjugated by his gravity and the convinced thunder of his voice. To this tour attaches a pleasing legend, based on the fact that he could not be trusted to dress himself properly when away from his vigilant family. At Ghent—the story goes—his collar and ready-made tie (a *lavallière*) having come undone 'il aurait prié l'adjoint du bourgmestre, qui était officiellement son garde du corps, de lui indiquer une maison spéciale "où l'une de ces dames" consentirait certainement à lui rendre le petit service de lui mieux fixer sa cravate.' The exquisite politeness of the phrase is, at the least, *ben trovato*. Mallarmé also once lectured at Oxford and Cambridge, where he gazed at the dons with envious admiration—'une présence d'hommes, uniques par l'Europe et au monde, qui, à mon sens, domine la pierre historique, comme je fus surtout étonné d'eux: Aujourd'hui, choisissant, à parfaire, une impression de beauté, véritablement la fleur et le résultat ce son



es *Fellows*.' These 'délicieux messieurs', as he calls them, were treated to a discourse that is all but impenetrable, even when one is reading, very carefully, each phrase. Belgium and England were the only foreign countries visited by the poet who has given to *Wanderlust* its most memorable expression—in the verses ending 'Mais ô mon âme entend le chant des matelots!'

Only one other exterior event kindles our curiosity. This impoverished, orderly, middle-aged schoolmaster, unknown except to a few almost similarly obscure writers and painters, enjoyed for years the favours of a dazzling and triumphant courtesan, Méry Laurent. She was kept in opulence by the American dentist, Evans, known to history because he managed the escape from France in 1870 of the Empress Eugénie. One of her *amants de cœur* had been Manet, who was an intimate friend of Mallarmé. He made many portraits of her, in which we see a cumulation of auburn hair, and eyebrows lifted high above a delicately pointed nose. After Manet's death Mallarmé became her lover; the affair was serene and durable; far from objecting, Evans used to take Mallarmé with Méry to Royat, forming a trio that teases one's imagination. Her choice of Mallarmé is immeasurably creditable to the lady, and one's esteem, I think, overflows on to the society in which such astonishing conjunctions could occur. Mallarmé discovered a stimulus to his imagination not only in her splendid person—his verse is rich in erotic imagery—but in the extravagance of her toilet, the luxury of her table and all her surroundings—even the cornice of her bedroom was upholstered in satin. The elaborations of material refinement were to Mallarmé what natural beauty or drugs were to other poets; a console table, a looking-glass, a lace curtain, a glass flower-vase, provided themes for some of his most elaborate poems; he wrote a whole series of verses for fans; and with Méry Laurent he found something of what he had dreamt of when, a young man, he made Hérodiade speak of 'Le blond torrent de mes cheveux immaculés', together with the then prized embellishment of scents, precious metals and 'froides pierreries'. (We are in the world of *Salammbô*, *A Rebours*, and the paintings of Gustave Moreau.) Of Méry it is not to be supposed that she understood, or thought she understood, a word that Mallarmé wrote, apart from the pretty cracker-mottoes he composed for her to send with her presents. But one must, I suggest, allow her

a measure of intuition; she liked Manet's pictures before she saw the handsome artist, and then came to adopt the opinions of his circle; also she must have been responsive to Mallarmé's personal distinction. With the manners of an eighteenth-century courtier, he combined a wit delightful in surprises. The evidence for his irresistible charm is certain; and we can catch the traces of this in Manet's portrait of him. Remove the poet's moustache, suppose him dark instead of blond; at once we are reminded of M. Cocteau by the almond-shaped face, the sickle eyebrows and the shrewd squirrelish scrutiny.

But we must tear ourselves away from the delicious spectacle of Mallarmé in the alcove of Mme Laurent to consider him as he has most frequently been described. It is a Tuesday in the Nineties, and the sitting-room in the Rue de Rome has been prepared for the hebdomadal rite. There are a dozen chairs; on the round table under the lamp in its red silk shade, Geneviève has placed a vase of roses, a tobacco-jar and some Japanese ash trays. On the walls there are paintings by Manet, Berthe Morisot, Whistler, Odilon Redon and Gauguin. A cast by Rodin stands on an eighteenth-century console. The white stove has been stoked. Mallarmé in his carpet slippers is teasing his adored cat, Lilith. The bell rings—who this evening will be the listeners? Leconte de Lisle, Manet, Banville, Villiers de l'Isle-Adam and Laforgue are dead. Maupassant has become mad, Verlaine is in hospital or dead-drunk, Huysmans is given up to devotion; but Heredia still sometimes comes, and beside the faithful symbolist disciples, Viélé-Griffin, René Ghil, Fontainas, Henri de Regnier, Robert de Montesquieu, there may be Barrès or Rémy de Gourmont, and there are sure to be some of the young catechumens who are beginning to be writers, Claudel, Gide, Francis Jammes, Léon Paul Fargue, Valéry. Some foreigners too enjoy the privilege: Verhaeren, Maeterlinck, Rodenbach, Arthur Symons, Wilde, George Moore, Charles Whibley, Stefan George, Munch, and—one of Mallarmé's old and close friends—Whistler. Vuillard may come, who is to illustrate the host's latest and most adventurous experiment *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le Hasard*; or Debussy, who, inspired by Mallarmé's poem, has just composed the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*. ('Je croyais l'avoir moi-même mis en musique', Mallarmé said; adding that the music went positively further 'dans la nostalgie et la lumière, avec finesse, avec malais

vec richesse.' The five nouns are notable as a definition by the poet of the virtues at which he had aimed.) Perhaps it is this evening that the caustic Degas arrives grumbling: he has been trying to write verse—'Quel métier, j'ai perdu toute ma journée avec un sacré sonnet sans avancer d'un pas. . . . Et cependant ce ne sont pas les idées qui me manquent. . . . J'en suis plein. . . . J'en ai trop.' 'Ce n'est pas avec les idées qu'on fait les sonnets, Degas,' Mallarmé answers, 'c'est avec les mots.' When the guests have arrived, Geneviève and her mother disappear into the bedroom they share; Mallarmé lights his red clay pipe, and the enchantment begins.

On entrait chez Mallarmé; c'était le soir; on trouvait là d'abord un grand silence; à la porte tous les bruits mouraient; Mallarmé commençait à parler d'une voix douce, musicale, inoubliable. . . . Chose étrange; IL PENSAIT AVANT DE PARLER. Et pour la première fois, près de lui, on sentait, on touchait, la réalité de la pensée; ce que nous cherchions, ce que nous voulions, ce que nous adorions dans la vie, existait; un homme, ici, avait tout sacrifié à cela. . . .

Thus Gide recalls the effect; but of what Mallarmé said the accounts are inadequate. From his articles in prose, too, we get little help, for this is no less elliptical and recondite than his verse. And Edmund Gosse assures us that 'in his conversation, which was marked by good sense no less than by a singular delicacy of perception, there was no trace of the wilful perversity of his written style.' Some of his letters, however, may give us a hint. The talk was always about the arts and abstract thought—I think Mallarmé was virgin of political knowledge and hardly looked at the daily newspaper. There was nothing professorial in his manner; his gestures held a prelatical suavity, but fancy and wit played about his words, which were 'un incessant va-et-vient entre le sublime et le familier'. Something would be said about the recent books—Mallarmé was burdened with the incessant homage of volumes produced by his disciples, so distressingly more prolific than himself. The Lamoureux concert of the previous Sunday might then be touched on: Mallarmé went each week to what he called his Vespers, depending on the great peaking waves of music to wash from his mind all the dust of actuality. Thus the conversation mounted into the rarer air, in which the others fell behind and the gentle warlock found himself

alone among the glaciers of Aesthetics. His divagations started usually from some most unexpected and unpromising detail he had noticed, which led to the analogies between the arts, the irresistible exactions of the poet's calling, the beckoning possibilities and impossibilities of techniques for expression. Or a question about his early departure from the influence of Baudelaire and the Parnassiens might set the fountain throwing its various and parabolic jets.

'J'ai voulu rester implacablement dans mon sujet. L'effet produit, sans une dissonance, sans une fioriture, même adorable qui distrair—voilà ce que je cherchais. Et ç'a été une terrible difficulté de combiner dans une juste harmonie, l'élément dramatique hostile à l'idée de poésie juste et subjective, avec la sérénité et le calme des lignes nécessaire à la beauté. J'écrivais *Hérodiade* avec terreur, car j'inventais une langue qui devait nécessairement jaillir d'une poétique très nouvelle, que je pourrais définir en ces deux mots: Peindre non la chose mais l'effet qu'elle produit. . . .

'Un vieux rêve avait installé en moi comme une grotte marine où il s'est donné de curieux spectacles, si je ne m'abuse. . . . Un pauvre poète, qui n'est que poète—c'est-à-dire un instrument qui résonne sous les doigts des diverses sensations—est muet quand il vit dans un milieu où rien ne l'émeut, puis ses cordes se distendent, et viennent la poussière et l'oubli. . . .

A silence, and next a *scherzo*: 'Quand je rencontre un homme qui mène à son bras une belle femme, j'ai envie de m'approcher de lui, de lui sauter au cou, en disant 'Comme je vous remercie d'être l'aimer ainsi et de tout ce que vous m'évitez et que j'eusse sans doute fait pour elle, des fautes, des folies, des crimes peut-être.

And so to and fro between fantasy and the pursuit of the absolute: 'Je cherche à construire un poème d'une pureté que l'homme n'a pas atteinte—et n'atteindra peut-être jamais—car on se pourrait que je ne fusse le jouet d'une illusion, et que la machine humaine ne soit pas assez parfaite pour arriver à de tels résultats. . . .

Then an oblique anecdote about himself. 'Vous ne pleurez donc jamais en vers, Monsieur?' on a demandé à un poète. 'Ni nè me mouche!' il a cru pouvoir répondre. . . .

'La Poésie est l'expression, par le langage humain ramené à son rythme essentiel, du sens mystérieux de l'existence: elle



que ainsi d'authenticité notre séjour et constitue la seule tâche spirituelle. La poésie n'est que l'expression musicale et suraiguë, notionnante, d'un état d'âme. . . . Evoquer, dans une ombre expresse, l'objet tu, par des mots allusifs, jamais directs, se réduisant du silence égal, comporte tentative proche de créer. Le vers, trait cantatoire! et ouvre la rime une similitude avec les ronds, parmi herbe, de la fée ou du magicien. . . .

'Pour moi le cas d'un poète, en cette société qui ne le permet de vivre, c'est le cas d'un homme qui s'isole pour sculpter son propre tombeau. . . .'

An interval to fill his pipe, then he turns to Paul Valéry and invites that precocious youth to repeat a phrase in which he had proved his discipleship; whereupon the lisp and Mediterranean accent of Valéry are heard describing his notion of the poet: 'Ce n'est plus le délirant échevelé, celui qui écrit tout un poème dans une nuit de fièvre, c'est un froid savant, presque un algébriste, au service d'un rêveur raffiné'. Somebody, perhaps George Moore, since to foreigners such temerities come more easily, quotes an old letter he has seen from Mallarmé to Cazalis about an early poem: '. . . le sens, s'il en a un (mais je me consolerais au contraire grâce à la dose de poésie qu'il renferme, ce me semble), est évoqué par un mirage interne des mots même.' Mallarmé smiles, I fancy, neither accepting nor denying. It is nearly thirty years since this provocative remark, and even then may have been a *boutade*. And the guests disperse, trying to remember the spells to which they have been subjugated. 'Tout le monde'—had he said that or was memory already a traitor?—'Tout le monde existe pour aboutir à un livre.' His talk, like his verse, sprang from the detection of analogies; and a line hitherto unpublished from his latest writing summarizes best what they had been listening to:

Divers rapprochements scintillés absolus.

The poet, his solitude recovered, was wrestling—for sleep rarely visited him—with the scene he had for twenty years been seeking to add to *Hérodiade*,

A quel psaume de nul antique antiphonaire

Où planer ici comme un viril tonnerre

Du cachot fulguré pour s'ensevelir où? . . . .

(Ten years previously he had said to Dujardin, 'Je raye le mot *psaume* du vocabulaire', but the manuscript shows the word.) He

continued the implacable task of exalting the majestic sentence of over twenty lines to an ultimate perfection, though this might be beyond the present power of men to apprehend.<sup>1</sup>

The English are profoundly a sceptical people, sympathetic to eccentricity but dismayed by devoutness pushed to its logical conclusion. Unfruitful for hundreds of years in saints, our soil has grown neither a Curé d'Ars nor a Mallarmé. To mitigate therefore what may seem—despite Méry Laurent—the intolerable ascetic features of my subject, I must say a word about Valvins. In this village on a reach of the Seine near Fontainebleau, Mallarmé had part of a peasant's house, a governess-cart drawn by a circus-pony called Gobemouche, and a little sailing-boat. In a big straw hat, at the tiller, letting out his jib to catch a catspaw he saw ruffling the willows, the poet presents to our insular weakness a more congenial picture. But he is still talking of high matter and the sheet of the sail still reminds him of 'le vide papier que la blancheur défend', the provocative, frigid paper that it is his inexorable calling, with what ritual and precaution, to violate. Here, by the watery looking-glass, the poet died, who had discovered in mirrors the symbol of his obsession, *le Néant*.

<sup>1</sup>For those more adept in Mallarmé I append the continuation of the to quite recondite passage, hitherto unpublished:

Sauf amplificatrice irruption ou trou  
Grand ouvert par un vol ébloui de vitrage  
Bloc contre bloc jonchant le lugubre entourage,  
Le fantôme accoudé du pâle écho latent  
Sous un voile debout ne dissimule tant  
Supérieurement à de noirs plis prophète  
Toujours que de ne pas perpétuer du faite  
Divers rapprochements scintillés absolus:

Et, , plus

Insoumis au joyau géant qui les attache  
Ce crépusculaire et fatidique panache  
De dentelles à flots torses sur le linon  
Taciturne vacille en le signe que non,  
Vains les noeuds éplorés, la nudité fausse  
Ensemble que l'agrafe avec ses feux rehausse,  
Plus abominé mais placide ambassadeur  
Le circonstanciel plat nu dans sa splendeur  
Tout ambiguïté par ce bord muet fuie  
Se fourbit, on dirait, s'époussette ou s'essuie. . . .

One verse is only outlined, and there is no attempt to accord the poet's final style with the translucence of the original *Hérodiade*.

At the age of twenty Mallarmé defined the æsthetic to which he remained faithful: 'Toute chose sacrée et qui veut demeurer crée s'enveloppe de mystère. . . . La musique nous offre un temple. . . . Depuis qu'il y a des poètes, il n'a pas été inventé, pour l'écartement des importuns, une langue immaculée. . . . O miroirs d'or des vieux missels! O hiéroglyphes inviolés des rouleaux de papyrus! . . . Que les masses lisent la morale, mais la grâce ne leur donnez pas votre poésie à gâter. O Poètes, vous avez toujours été orgueilleux; soyez plus, devenez dédaigneux.' Since Mallarmé the poets have not failed to be disdainful; and one raises a plaintive objection, his supreme example can be brought in evidence:

A la nue accablante tu  
Basse de basalte et de laves  
A même les échos esclaves  
Par une trompe sans vertu. . . .

Picasso, because he has the power to draw like Raphaël or Greco, can create a valid work of art with the wrapping of a cigarette-packet and a few scribbles; and fools rush in to imitate him, though they cannot draw even like Sir Frank Dicksee. The great masters are perilous as examples, as well as necessary. In any case for the obscurity that comes from private allusion or from negligence Mallarmé provides no excuse. Not a word, he says, in which he had not spent hours, and most of his poems took years to complete. Further I maintain that his glory depends less on his best works—*Un coup de dés* seems to me misconceived—than upon *après-midi d'un Faune*, *Hérodiade*, and such poems as *Brise marine* and, already sufficiently opaque, *Le vierge, le vivace et le bel aujourd'hui*. The first poems in the manner of Baudelaire already announce genius. Here is part of a sonnet, called *Naissance du poète*, which I will quote because it is curious as well as hitherto unpublished:

Parce que d'un lit grand comme une sacristie  
Il voit sur la pendule un couple antique et fol;  
Ou qu'il n'a pas sommeil, et que, sans modestie,  
Sa jambe sous les draps frôle une jambe au vol,  
Un niais met sous lui sa femme froide et sèche,  
Contre ce bonnet blanc frotte son casque à mèche  
Et travaille en soufflant inexorablement;

Et de ce qu'une nuit, sans rage et sans tempête,  
Ces deux êtres se sont accouplés en dormant,  
O Shakspeare et toi, Dante, il peut naître un poète!

More significant are some earlier versions of poems that have become famous. Here is an example that shows the process by which he made his lines richer and more dense:

Pauvre, voici cent sous. . . . Longtemps tu cajolas  
—Ce vice te manquait—le songe d'être avare?  
Ne les enfouis pas pour qu'on te sonne un glas.  
Evoque de l'Enfer un péché plus bizarre.  
Tu peux ensanglanter tes brumeux horizons  
D'un rêve ayant l'éclat vermeil d'une fanfare.

Compare the final version:

Prends ce sac, Mendiant! tu ne le cajolas  
Sénile nourrisson d'une tétine avare  
Afin de pièce à pièce en égoutter ton glas.  
Tire du métal cher quelque péché bizarre  
Et vaste comme nous, les poings pleins, le baisons  
Souffles-y qu'il se torde! une ardente fanfare.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>With apologies for their obviousness or insufficiency, I append a few notes based upon a comparison of the two versions. The title of the poem has been changed from *Le Mendiant* to *L'Aumône*, and in Line 1 poverty has been aggravated into beggary. The sum of money has been generalized into a bag, to harmonize with the powerful new metaphor in Line 2. Line 3: single coins are introduced to continue the image of the knell, the strokes of which fall from the steeple in metallic drips. The alliteration of nasals in Line 2 suggests the whining of a puny infant, and the rhythm of the third line makes it long and full of intervals like a continuous tolling. Line 4: Avarice is not a bizarre sin, so the comparative is banished; and, more important, the precious metal is again emphasized instead of the abstract and extraneous notion of Hell. Line 5: A trope and a rhythm that might be Baudelaire's or even Hugo's are replaced by a typically Mallarmean line, the sense of which I find uncertain. 'Nous' I take to be the rich who kiss the gold of which their fists are full; and the beggar (Line 6) is told similarly to put his lips to the metal—but in order to blow it into the curves of a trumpet. (In the *Après-midi* Mallarmé twice uses similar imagery about the creative power of breath, which turns a reed into music and an empty grape-skin into the coloured transparency of glass.) The influence of Baudelaire, so conspicuous in the first version, written in 1864, hardly shows in the second published in 1887, until the last line of the poem, with its paradoxical bravado. 'Et surtout ne va pas, frère, acheter du pain.' I am confident that the definitive version was finished many years before its publication. Not only is it placed in the very incomplete 'Edition complète' before a poem dated 1877, but it lacks the assonances and inversions characteristic of Mallarmé's later verse.



Similarly here are the opening lines of the *Monologue d'un Faune*, guide convenient though not indispensable to the *Après-midi* we now:

J'avais des Nymphes! Est-ce un songe? Non, le clair  
Rubis des seins levés embrase encore l'air  
Immobile et je bois les soupirs.

Où sont-elles?

O feuillage, si tu protèges ces mortelles  
Rends-les-moi, par Avril qui gonfle tes rameaux  
Nubiles—(Je languis encore de tels maux)—  
Et par la nudité des roses, O feuillage!  
Rien. Je les veux. Mais si ce beau couple au pillage  
N'était qu'illusion de tes sens fabuleux?

Here is the final version, with the sensuality made less precise:

Ces nymphes, je les veux perpétuer.

Si clair,

Leur incarnat léger, qu'il voltige dans l'air  
Assoupi de sommeils touffus.

Aimai-je un rêve?

Mon doute, amas de nuit ancienne, s'achève  
En maint rameau subtil, qui, demeuré les vrais  
Bois mêmes, prouve, hélas! que bien seul je m'offrais  
Pour triomphe la faute idéale de roses.  
Réfléchissons. . . .

ou si les femmes dont tu gloses

Figurent un souhait de tes sens fabuleux!

The poem is historically so important as well as of so capital a beauty that I must give another extract from the hitherto unpublished early version:

J'allais, quand à mes pieds s'entremêlent, fleuries  
De la pudeur d'aimer en ce lit hasardeux,  
Deux dormeuses parmi l'extase d'être deux.  
Je les saisis sans les désenlacer, et vole  
A des jardins, haïs par l'ombrage frivole,  
De roses tisonnant d'impudeur au soleil,  
Où notre amour, à l'air consumé soit pareil. . . .

The scene is said to have been suggested by the Boucher 'Pan and Syrinx' in the National Gallery. Here is the final state of this passage:

J'accours; quand, à mes pieds, s'entrejoignent (meurtries  
 De la langueur goûtée à ce mal d'être deux)  
 Des dormeuses parmi leurs seuls bras hasardeux;  
 Je les ravis, sans les désenlacer, et vole  
 A ce massif, haï par l'ombrage frivole,  
 De roses tarissant tout parfum au soleil,  
 Où notre ébat au jour consumé soit pareil.

The version written in 1865 is here surprisingly close to the poem we know, which was completed in 1875. (Refused for the *Troisième Parnasse Contemporain* by the stupidity of François Coppée and Anatole France, it was first published, in an *édition de luxe* with illustrations by Manet, in 1876.) One more comparison: the last line of the early *Monologue d'un Faune* runs

Adieu, femmes; duo de vierges quand je vins.

In the definitive version this boast vanishes into shadow:

Couple, adieu; je vais voir l'ombre que tu devins.

The *Après-midi* shows Mallarmé preoccupied with the relation between reality and the product of the imagination—a relation that he believed to be an identity, for he carried his idealism (in the metaphysical sense) to its extreme. 'Artifice', he wrote 'que la réalité, bon à fixer l'intellect moyen entre les mirages d'un fait.' Let me quote from Téodor de Wyzewa's *Nos Maîtres*

A chacun de ses vers il s'est efforcé d'attacher plusieurs sens superposés. Chacun de ses vers, dans son intention, devait être à la fois une image plastique, l'expression d'une pensée, l'énoncé d'un sentiment et un symbole philosophique.

I think one may accept this account of Mallarmé's intention especially as it was written by a disciple who knew it would meet the master's eye; but it would be unwise to take Mallarmé's metaphysics very seriously. He thought, says Thibaudet (who I consider the best of living critics), 'with images rather than ideas, with words rather than sentences.' One must add that Mallarmé intended each verse not only to bear these superimposed senses but to carry a melody. He was insistent upon the analogy between poetry and music. He envied particularly composers because the material in which they worked did not possess the practical as well as an æsthetic value. Words unluckily were the small change of daily life, rubbed and greasy coins, which the po-

ad so to select and arrange that their vulgar usefulness could be forgotten. This, I suggest, was the principal reason for Mallarmé's obscurity. To achieve 'une langue immaculée', he made it more and more labyrinthine.<sup>1</sup>

A further reason for the difficulty of these writings may be that Mallarmé hoped the effort demanded of the readers would provide them with the valuable equivalent of the creative effort put forward by the poet. This seems to me a dubious ambition, for the necessity of intellectual effort may interfere with the direct impact of a work of art. But it is true that one never sees for instance of Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*, partly at least because one never unravels the final knot of its intricacies; and the more one reads Mallarmé, the stronger his fascination. Mallarmé's taste for continuity and condensation also rendered his writing more recondite. The whole poem is often poured into a single sentence—he was a virtuoso of syntax—and the natural order of the words is outrageously changed, so that his verse gains the compactness of Latin. In this respect it has analogies with the art of mosaic—so intimately tessellated is the language—and even with the carvings of a Romanesque capital, which gain vitality by being so vigorously compressed.

Despite such analogies, the writing of Mallarmé belongs conspicuously to his epoch. The poetry is carefully imprecise as well as dense: he abhors the sharp contours of a description, and concentrates upon evoking what is unmentioned, so that he has occupations in common not only with Claude Monet but with the vaporous Carrière and even with Loïe Fuller. The cold

Mallarmé's verse began to be hermetic when he was aged about twenty. At this period he wrote his first version of the sonnet that begins 'Ses purs gles très haut dédiant leur onyx.' In this he used the word 'ptyx,' unknown to Littré. (It occurs in Victor Hugo's *Le Satyre*, but here I feel sure it was a mistake for 'Pnyx,' the knoll on the Acropolis.) Some critics have supposed that Mallarmé invented the word 'ptyx' as a symbol of meaninglessness, for it is qualified in the poem as 'aboli bibelot d'inanité sonore.' But in the first version the line runs 'insolite vaisseau d'inanité sonore,' which confirms, I think, the suggestion now generally adopted that 'ptyx' here means a shell, which held to the ear is sonorous as with the rumour of the sea. πτυξ, in fact, means a fold, and might thus serve to suggest the plication of a shell. I cannot subscribe to M. Mauron's theory that it here not only provides but means a rhyme. It is pleasing to discover in M. Mondor's book, though published in a Paris under the German heel, courteous references to the English translation of Mallarmé, by Roger Fry, with notes by M. Mauron.)

and rigid metal-work of the Parnassians being no less alien to him than the generous but often facile eloquence of Lamartine and Hugo, he resumes the tradition of preciousness that Boileau had almost succeeded in expelling from literature, a tradition that the applied arts had continued to flourish through the eighteenth century. The *Art nouveau* of the nineties showed, though infelicitously, a filiation to the *Louis quinze* style; and Mallarmé for all his exalted ambitions can be considered a master of the rococo. To ride a bicycle he described as 'enrouler, entre les jarrets, sur la chaussée, selon l'instrument en faveur, la fiction d'un éblouissant rail continu.' One remembers, too, *Placet futile* (I quote from the earlier version):

Nommez nous . . . pour qu'Amour ailé d'un éventail  
M'y peigne flûte aux doigts endormant ce bercail  
Princesse, nommez nous berger de vos sourires.<sup>1</sup>

His prose is more continually and distractingly interrupted by qualifications than that of Henry James's last period; and he aggravated the reader's perplexity by inventing a personal system of punctuation that grouped words, independently of syntax, in the associations he had determined. His verse is technically the most artful, I think, in the French language. He delights in varying the place of the tonic accents, in assonances and alliterations, in the emphasis obtainable from *rejets* and *faux-rejets*. But on such nice points of technique I can presume to add nothing to the masterly analysis contained in M. Thibaudet's *La Poésie de Stéphane Mallarmé*.

In 1896 the youthful Proust published an essay, thoughtfully envisaging Mallarmé, declaring that the desire to displease the public was no less mediocre than the desire to please it. D

<sup>1</sup> A French friend, M. Pierre Bourdon, now admired throughout his country for his broadcasts from London, has pointed out to me the particular relevance of the poem in which Mallarmé expresses his desire to

Imiter le Chinois au cœur limpide et fin  
De qui l'extase pure est de peindre la fin  
Sur les tasses de neige à la lune ravie  
D'une bizarre fleur qui parfume sa vie  
Transparente, la fleur qu'il a sentie, enfant,  
Au filigrane bleu de l'anse se greffant. . . .

His own ambition thus resumed itself in taking a delicate or even trivial subject, remembered perhaps with the intensity that belongs to childhood, and applying to it the furthest refinement of expressive craftsmanship.



Mallarmé, I think, was honestly little interested in the public. When his writings were found difficult to understand, he expressed astonishment: 'Ils ne savent pas lire.' In his twenties, it is amusing to remember, the *Faune* had been planned originally as a monologue for Coquelin; and *Hérodiade* was similarly destined for the Comédie française. (The theatre, Mallarmé was delighted to learn, already possessed scenery of the appropriate period!) When such ingenuousness was dissipated, he became averse from publication. He disliked the attention of persons incapable of sympathizing with his purposes, and there has never been an artist so concerned with making known either his personality or his productions. Believing that only a very small proportion of human beings were congenitally able to make the effort required for the education of their æsthetic sensibility, he was too logical to wish for public approval. While some great artists are easy not indeed to reach but to approach, others are impenetrable except to the man who has given himself a specialized training. These need to apologize no more than the equally abstruse masters of mathematics or metaphysics; but if they complain of neglect, they become contemptible. Gently but obstinately aloof, Mallarmé reserved a dignity that commands our veneration.

He can, no doubt, be held to typify in his ivory tower a bourgeoisie appalled by the hideous and visible consequences of its own greed. Sober history shows that he was paid by the State, and never earned more than £200 a year. His life, no less than his art, seems to be exemplary. One day he was found in the forest of Fontainebleau with a spiked stick, removing the litter that disfigured the mottled glades: 'J'aurai demain Rénier et quelques amis,' he explained; 'je prépare les lieux.' It is preposterous that a just concern for the well-being of the majority should impede the preparation of places for the *élite*. The more we dilapidate the fictitious distinctions based upon the gift of a man, or of his ancestors, for making profits, the more signal becomes the genuine superiority of genius. Productivity is now often held up to us as the ultimate purpose of human life, and the notion of quality is thus menaced with oblivion. One may agree that capitalism is vile in its ethic, and obsolete in its technique, but could it not be a pleasing surprise to discover in its more violent proponents some sign that they recognized the value of such a man as Stéphane Mallarmé? His intentions seem to me even more

important than his achievements, though these include some of the most beautiful verses ever contrived. He may indeed be thought failure, in so far as he never managed to extend the limits of human expression to the point that he hoped. The significance of the forest was for him epitomized in its tallest points where it vanished into the emptiness of air. Similarly he was intent upon lifting language to the furthest fineness at the summit of human responsiveness, and on the brink, as it were, of silence. Such a design may seem excessive, but how futile the diurnal and agonizing evolution of man must appear, if it is not justified by pleasures continually more refined and more rewarding. To the man of letters, at any rate, Mallarmé must figure as the archetypal heroism.

## JANKEL ADLER

# MEMORIES OF PAUL KLEE

*(Born December 1879, died 29th June 1940)*

IN the year 1931 Klee and I were often together. We had studied on the same floor in the old academy at Dusseldorf. We agreed about a certain knock on his door, one rap with the single knuckle and one flat-hand blow. Too many visitors disturbed him. For years he had been interested in my technical experiments. He himself took days to prepare small canvases. Later he glued them to pieces of plywood or cardboard in the same way as the painters of Sienna. The picture began with the start of the preparation of the canvas and finished with the completion of the frame. So that it is not 'of art' but a complete object, an object which makes you richer.

He used to gaze for a long time at his prepared canvas before he began the drawing. The canvas resembled an old piece of Coptic cloth. The warp and the woof acquired an importance of design which the weaver had never imagined. The canvas being thick or more open in its weaving was of essential significance to his life. It became of great importance to his aims. To the weaver



PAUL KLEE. Around the Fish, 1926



PAUL KLEE. One who Understands, 1934



was dead. Klee would listen to the speaking of this dead thing. He was able to catch a new language with his eyes in this way. Many years after its weaving the canvas was brought alive.

I have never seen a man who had such creative quiet. It radiated from him as from the sun. His face was that of a man who knows about day and night, sky and sea and air. He did not speak about these things. He had no tongue to tell of them. Our language is too little to say these things. And so he had to find a sign, a colour, or a form.

Klee's studio was a spacious room, Spartan and simple. But I do not say empty. Often, when I went in, I did not say 'Good morning,' and I was greeted by the smell of cooking celery. He was making soup on a spirit stove. One whole wall was a window. From the window you could see the Academy gardens. There was a gnarled and dusty criss-cross of branches, of crippled grey boughs which took away the view from the outside. Between the branches there were little spaces through which we could see the elevated street going up to the Rhine bridge towards Obercassel. On the other side straight across the street could be seen a little hill which the people called Napoleonsberg. There were strange trees taken from foreign countries which had grown up and closed the horizon.

I have often seen Klee's window from the street, with his pale oval face, like a large egg, and his open eyes pressed to the window-pane. From the street he looked like a spirit. Perhaps he was trying to decipher the language of the branches across his windows.

Much sculpture and drawings of the Aztecs has disappeared, destroyed by the Spanish Jesuits; on Easter Island there are knots in strings made in a language; these great figures have about them a timeless atmosphere. That is a beginning. Sometimes I think that Klee in his pictures comes near an unravelling, an explanation of such things. For Klee's voice has not so much to do with the service of island faiths or with visions guided by the climate of those places. His concern is more with the human soul. It is more real for him to be near the first word, the element of making known. And to be the after-word of the people who follow in the future.

Klee, when beginning a picture, had the excitement of a Columbus moving to the discovery of a new continent. He had a

frightened presentiment, just a vague sense of the right course. But when the picture was fixed and still he saw that he had come the true way, he was happy. Klee, too, set out to discover a new land.

In his Munich days, at the end of summer, Klee used to sit in the late afternoon in his studio with the graphic artist Kubin. At the window the sky was a soft violet. On a table near the window there was a pot with water, which Klee used for his water-colours. He watched the water's reflection of the sky in the pot. To do this he lay on the table, which began to shudder under his nervous weight. Kubin was watching Klee the whole time. After a while he came over near to him. He put his arms round him. Klee said, 'I am not very comfortable—I am not like this—I have nothing to do with this.' Kubin leaned over with his mouth to Klee's ear, and whispered very tenderly, 'swindler'. 'Today I laugh about it,' said Klee, 'but that day I did not laugh.' For me this resembles the revolt of the sailors on Columbus's voyage of discovery.

Klee has the courage to walk this clean-swept platform of the twentieth century and not to continue in the shades of Renaissance standards. He did not try to make a new shadow. He made a survey of this place for others who will come.

Now is the time for statement, to make that which is not slave to optical comparison, which is no more a fragment. We must make a picture which is a complete manifestation of being.

Picasso, the great innovator of the twentieth century, has knocked on the door of every painter's studio in the world. The richness of his form gives a totality from which to build the scaffolding of new painting.

Klee made the background which reflects the intricate movements of our different lives. Here in the quivering of a leaf he experiences the violence of a thunderstorm. Sometimes it would seem that his pictures extend to the other side of the canvas. We connect with his pictures not only with our eyes, but our whole skin becomes a sensitive surface of eyes. We become the awareness of the barometer. Our sensibilities have been buried beneath the waste products of this life. Klee takes those crippled senses back to the air and the light.

The functional idea in architecture must come from the new building. But alone there is no movement to progress. The road

finishes. For its realization it is necessary for architecture to go coupled with the painting and plastic of today.

Malewicz in Russia, Mondrian in Holland, and Nicholson in England have preached balance in painting. This has a didactic value. But it is more the scholastic of painting than the expressed value. They are not yet pictures but necessary scholastic examples.

Of all the countries at this time perhaps in Britain there is a chance of retaining the spiritual power of this heritage from Klee and Picasso. This realization has to do with this country's future for living and seems the only reason for its secure and continuing peace.

## ARCHIMEDES

# THE FREEDOM OF NECESSITY—III

### FIRST AND LAST THINGS

The history of the universe need have no beginning or end. The further we go away from human experience into the vast expanses of time and space, the more difficult it is to analyse the processes that are taking place, and the more uncertain are the results of the analysis. The two things on which we cannot expect to be clear, and on which any apparent clarity would be completely deceptive, are the origins and the fate of the whole universe. We may reasonably hope to push our knowledge back stage after stage into the past, and with much greater difficulty, owing to its greater complexity, look a few stages further into the future. But we must judge a philosophy more by what it refrains from saying about the origin and fate of the universe than by what it says. Nor can it be important to us now though it may be later to know the more remote stages of our history, because these must provide the stablest elements of our present world and have the least direct effect on our immediate concerns.

All we can say safely is that there is now a certain connection

between the fundamental laws of physics and cosmic structure or, to put it in other words, that cosmos is a thing and process at the same time. The thing we have analysed into assemblage of elementary particles—protons, neutrons, electrons, mesons or any others which are yet to be discovered. The ways in which the process works are the laws of physics.

### GALAXIES AND STARS

Two problems meet us at the outset. How did the odd hundreds of stable atom nuclei get formed in the first place, some in enormously greater numbers than others, and how did they come to agglomerate in the large and small concentrations that we call galaxies and stars? These are problems for the astronomer and physicist together, so far largely unsolved but at least they have shown that the heavier atoms are not being made now and that the stars and galaxies were once far closer together. The answer pointed to but unproved is the previous existence of a more concentrated universe in which the first atoms were built out of lighter units and where their very formation led to a critical state which was resolved by the condensation of stars and their scattering in whirls through space.

The stars themselves are impermanent seats of the most violent processes; some pulsate, others explode, others again spin themselves in two. The astrophysicists are just beginning to understand these processes and how they are linked with the properties of isolated atoms. Here again critical events are the rule.

The break-up of stars may be intrinsic or provoked by passing neighbour. It seems likely that the peculiar small bodies we call planets must have been formed in some such way though we do not yet know the most probable mechanism. The result was to produce a state of affairs unlike anything that could happen on the larger and hotter stars. On a small, cooling planet, atoms, which had previously existed isolated or in small simple molecules, now found themselves closely packed into crystalline metals and rocks, and the properties by virtue of which they arranged themselves in an enormous variety of chemical compounds, though always immanent in them, were now revealed for the first time. The primitive earth itself is



urn was subject to series after series of violent instabilities due to cooling of the crust, instabilities that we still do not properly understand but know to be the basis of most geological phenomena. A hard, inorganic world of air, water and rock came into being. Oceans and continents, mountains and rivers were formed, broken up and re-formed over and over again.

### THE ORIGIN OF LIFE

All the time an instability of a far more significant kind was gradually building up, owing to the very conditions of uniform change that were occurring in the earth's surface. Here a number of chemical substances derived from the sea and a primitive atmosphere, which was unlike ours in that it contained little free oxygen and much carbon, were constantly being formed by the synthetic action of solar radiation. These came into more and more complex reactions with each other, and, at some specially favourable time and place, their reactions became cyclical and indefinitely repeatable, so that complex molecules of certain types could regularly be built out of simpler ones. Here, in effect, is the origin of life; and, although direct evidence for this view will always be wanting, there is plenty of circumstantial evidence for it. It is relatively straightforward to determine what the atmosphere and conditions of the earth must have been without life. We can also see, by the extraordinarily limited and peculiar collection of molecules we find common to all living species, plant or animal, that once the first self-reproducing chemical associations were formed, the process became stable and stereotyped. The great step from non-living to living is essentially a physico-chemical step.

In the early history of life, the shapes and interactions of molecules were the only things that mattered. The achievements of that stage were the establishment of certain purely chemical transformations by which progressively more and more of the chemical environment could be incorporated in the organism, making it at the same time more resistant to changes in the physical environment. The greatest, perhaps the essential, achievement of early life, was the building up of the complex protein molecules which combine three properties that together form the basis of the physical as well as of the chemical activities of organisms. Each protein has a characteristic atomic pattern

which can act as a firm mould for repeatable chemical processes. All proteins carry electric charges and react to the electrical charges in the environment in a way that provides the basis for sensation and movement. Some proteins can be changed into rigid structures of every consistency from jelly to horn and thus provide the skeleton of the first definite living unit of the single cell. It is on the foundation of the regular chemical reactions of cells that all higher vital functions, such as sensation and movement, are built. The understanding of bio-chemistry is the unravelling of the origin of life.

## EVOLUTION

Now, although chemistry is the basis of life, it is only the beginning. Once life had got hold of the world, it in turn produced new instabilities, but now these were inside the field of life itself, and led to the next stage, the development of the multiplicity of stably reproducing life forms, or, in a word, evolution. The appearance of each new successful life form is itself the outcome of a minor crisis in the relation of their parent forms to their environment, including other life forms. Gradual changes in environment naturally favoured the development of one or other aspect of living ability, but the primary source of novelty was inside the living forms themselves.

In the process of that evolution entirely new structures and functions came into existence. The single cell no longer was the only self-sufficing organism; many cells growing together permanently, mutually assisting each other and having different functions, built up the larger animals and plants.

The need for food led in one direction to the mobility of animals in the pursuit or entrapping of other living structures. In another it led to more complicated syntheses in plants, through which they found the means of making use of universally present simple molecules. Growth and division are sufficient for the chemical stage of existence, but more complex sexual systems of reproduction arose from the difficulties of producing a viable small original which had later to develop in size and complexity.

As organisms grew in size, new problems arose, owing to the need of surface area keeping pace with bulk. The solution was found in the elaboration of tubular and branch structures.

in both animals and plants, and of internal circulatory systems to make existing surfaces more effective. The multiplicity of shapes that organisms assumed represented the material expression of the solutions of these physiological problems. In the animals that depended on their own bodily movement for acquiring food, the needs for mobility moulded external shape; head, tail, back, front, sides began to acquire significance. The problem of directed mobility solved itself by the specialization of chemical receptors into the sense organs of sight, hearing and touch. These in turn presented problems of co-ordination of sensation and movement, and this led to the development of a nervous system with its complicated behaviour responses.

Each new step in internal complexity corresponded externally to a better control of environment, and to a wider effective range. Animals and plants together crept out of the sea to colonize the more inhospitable but more rewarding land. Here it was necessary to provide a stable internal environment to cope with the much greater variations in the external one. The warm-blooded animals that succeeded best in this became the dominant forms. Among these we may discern man's ancestors.

#### THE ORIGIN OF MANKIND

The possibilities of a step in organization leading to a higher order of complexity than any that could be obtained by an individual animal had already been achieved by the social organization of many of the insects. But insect communities were absolutely limited by the physiological restrictions of their members which kept them small and fixed their behaviour patterns along rigid lines. Social development among birds and mammals had no such limitations. The conditions required for a permanent stable animal society were that its members should possess a certain degree of primitiveness of structure, good hand-eye co-ordination, and a long pre-adult stage. All these were developed among small tree-running animals which escaped the specialization of the wings of birds or of the hooves, horns, teeth and claws of the larger ground beasts.

The origin of human society marks a sharp new level of complexity in the universe. It was, of course, not a sudden thing, and it would be impossible to say at what precise point we should consider it was achieved. Nevertheless, the characters

of the earliest human societies of which we possess bones and tools show an enormous gap that had been built up already between them and all other animals. We are apt to think that this gap is due to some fundamental internal difference between men and animals. The materialists of the last century claimed that it was due to a superior brain, not realizing that this explained no more, if as much, as the medieval attribute of an immortal soul. The real distinction is not to be found in man, but in mankind, in human society, two characteristics of which are cumulative tradition and progressive domination over environment. The enduring tradition of common action supplementing individual learning based on instincts and bodily adaptations, helped man to make the most of an existing environment. The cultural and mental aspect of man's uniqueness are two aspects of the same thing.

Man was to show later that animals taken young and fed and handled in certain ways could have their behaviour so modified that they became almost different species. But before man had learned to domesticate animals, he had domesticated himself. Until very recently, little attention has been given to the extremely elaborate, and almost purely traditional, process by which, from the very moment of birth, the human infant is moulded into the pattern of the society in which he is born. At first handling and gestures, then language, and later all the civilized elaboration of writing and radio, are simply successive means for establishing and maintaining a continuous conditioning of human beings to society.

#### CO-OPERATION AND TRADITION

This conditioning would itself never have developed if human society had not been able to provide more for the individuals it comprised than they could get by their unaided efforts. Every trick of getting food, or of avoiding danger and discomfort, was now common instead of individual property. Joint exertions, mutual help, multiplied many times the power of the weak individual; and soon external objects, sticks, stones, began to be turned to use as an extension of natural limbs, at first in the raw, then shaped, then combined together to make tools, implements and finally machines. All this was only possible because every new technical advance had a chance of being incorporated



in a spreading and continuing tradition. This is not the product of the human brain; it is the human brain which has been obliged to acquire knowledge and to complicate itself in order to deal with the material that society was presenting to it.

The first human groups already represent an enormous advance on animal ways of living. Instead of depending on one way of getting food, they had many that could be interchanged. They also acquired, through the use of skins, caves and primitive shelters, the possibility of a greater independence from the weather than had their ancestors. As the possibility of tapping new food supplies increased, so did the range of human groups. An important step came when stone weapons were developed sufficiently to kill large animals. This put man on an equality with the lions and the wolves, and gave him the freedom of the plains on which ranged the herds of oxen, horse and deer.

#### THE FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL LIFE, KINSHIP AND KINDLINESS

It was while man was a hunter that he built up the foundations of social life which still live on in us and give us our deepest human feelings. Primitive society was based on the tribe, which was essentially a collaborating economic group established on common parentage. But it was not established on the family as we know it today. The researches of anthropologists have shown that the early families were based more on group than on individual relations. In the first place, relationship was traced through mothers and not through fathers. This, which is probably a relic of the time when the function of fatherhood was unknown, did not mean that the women ruled the clan, but it did mean that they assured its continuity.

Inside the clan, and inside the group of clans forming the tribe, behaviour and relations became strictly regulated by custom. Common work and mutual assistance was the rule. There were no rich or poor, lords or servants. Food was collected by each according to his special capability, the men hunting and fishing, the women gathering roots and berries; and all shared the produce in common. From that early tribal life, rough and insecure as it was, we have inherited the deep-rooted feelings of comradeship, equality, and the need to help our fellow man. These feelings have always persisted, in spite of being overlaid

by later civilization with its stress on individual acquisition of property and domination over inferiors; and it is to these deep-laid feelings that we must appeal in rebuilding human society in its present scientific and industrial phase.

In primitive society, however, loyalties and good feeling were limited to the tribe; obligations did not extend beyond the kinship groups. This did not mean that tribes were always at war. War, in fact, had not been invented, because the need for it on any serious scale did not exist. Tribal groups needed a wide and often shifting hunting ground, and came but rarely in contact with neighbouring tribes. Most times of the year there was no surplus available for any enterprise but the attention to their daily needs. But there was always time to think and play, and we know from what they have left behind that primitive men did develop, besides their practical work, a very rich and varied world of legend, magic and religion, not separated from but forming an essential part of their daily lives. They made pictures of the animals they hunted, they tended the bones of their dead in a way that shows that they thought of them as still living in some different way. We know, too, from existing primitive tribes something of the nature of their thoughts.

#### LANGUAGE AND BELIEF

Thinking itself was essentially a social occupation carried out even by individuals, through language. It was natural that thinking for the first time about the outside world, the world itself should be pictured as social and human. If a stone was moved or some animal killed, it was because some tribesman had wanted to do it. If there was no tribesman apparent, then it must have been some invisible tribesman, one of the dead ancestors who no longer walked with them. Animals, too, were thought of as humans in disguise. Each clan had its own pet animal or totem. This human social way of thinking has not disappeared nearly so much as we may think. It still pervades much of our own views of things. But because we can now handle the evil forces of nature in a practical and material way which primitive man could not, we think in this way only in the immaterial field, in considering such questions as morals or philosophy. The ancestors, totems and gods of the old hunters still live in our politics and religion,

## THE LIMITS OF PRIMITIVE SOCIETY

The appearance of human society marked an enormous step forward from the animal state, but in its first stage social man had one important economic limitation where no advance had been made. Early society could only exploit but not control its animal and plant environment. It could exploit it in a more varied and efficient way than could any species of specialized animals; that is, unlike the lions and wolves, it could turn to eating plants if the game gave out. Nevertheless, human beings could only find support from the surplus left by uncultivated nature. The effectiveness of the exploitation of nature determined the density of population that could be supported, and that density only amounted to about one person per square mile, which is a density only found today in desert regions.

So long as this limitation remained, human progress was severely curtailed. Units of population must necessarily remain small, except for short times in special favoured places, where large herds of animals congregated. What is more, it put human society at the mercy of the changes which affected the animals and plants towards the end of the Ice Age. In the North, forests began to spread over what had been open hunting country; the animals left when the woods came and men were faced with the alternatives of following the fringe of the retiring ice, becoming the ancestors of the present Eskimo, or of finding some new way of life.

## AGRICULTURE AND CIVILIZATION

Somewhere between Syria and India that new way was found and the first great revolution in human society occurred. Man, or, probably, woman, because plant gathering was woman's work, somehow discovered that edible plants could be made to grow more abundantly if they were tended, and even more so if their seeds were deliberately put in the ground. To catch and kill animals and eat plants as they grew was only to continue what their animal ancestors had done; but deliberately to interfere with the growth and reproduction of plants was something radically new and human. The discovery of agriculture together with the care and breeding of animals was the basis of civilization. From following the herd to pick off what calves and weaklings could be caught, man turned into a herdsman, protecting his

flocks, feeding them, and thus attaching them to him. By combining agriculture and pasturage the advantages of each were multiplied; the new fields gave more food for the cattle, the cattle increased the fertility of the fields. In favoured places first in upland valleys and then down in the big alluvial plains which before had been wild jungle, the new way of living spread. The first effect was to make possible an enormous increase in the density of the population, because now man had passed the critical stage and become a producing animal, not only an exploiting one. The loose tribe became the village, and with the village grew up new arts, first pottery and weaving, then the crucial discovery of metals.

### THE SPREAD OF AGRICULTURE

With abundant food, population increased rapidly, so that the capacities of the new agriculture soon became strained to their limits. But at first there was an easy way out, simply moving to new lands. The whole world could now be thrown open to agriculture. The peasants with their small herds moved slowly and steadily over mountains into new valleys, halting only where the sea or the desert formed an impassable boundary. Century by century the peasants filled Europe and Asia and the greater part of Africa, passed across the Behring Straits and covered the Americas from north to south.

All this took time. In remote districts it is still going on in our own days. The peasants who moved could not carry much with them. The cultures they formed were poor except where they could settle in some special fertile spot such as the plains of Hungary or the valleys of Mexico. But those who stayed behind, especially along the big rivers of Mesopotamia, Egypt and India, had the opportunities and the surplus of hands for a much more intense and rapid development. There, civilization concentrated and diversified itself. To till the great river plain co-operation no longer of tens but of thousands of people was needed. Dams had to be built, canals dug, and this meant order and government. The very prosperity that agriculture had brought helped to disrupt the old limited tribal organization. In the short time of a few centuries, intense human co-operation had brought forth all the leading characteristics that we now recognize as civilization, and produced a form of material and



social life which is still the one in which we pass most of our time. Villages clustered into cities, the customary exchange of produce between kinsmen degenerated into trade, and with trade came trademarks, which became mathematics and writing. With trade, too, came the break-up of the common sharing of tribal society. Grain and animals could be owned, and with ownership grew up the new distinctions of rich and poor, master and servant. Civilized man even went to the limit unthinkable to savages and treated other men as animals, owning them as slaves.

### WEALTH AND WAR

In this way, for the first time in history, some men could live without working with their hands. A very few of them spent their leisure time in developing literature and the sciences. The majority turned to the acquisition of more wealth, to wasteful spending and to fighting. The institution of war grew out of the development of cities. It was no longer a matter of dispute over a hunting ground which could be fought out between a score of tribesmen with little more violence than a football match. It was now a matter of thousands of acres of good land, to secure which hundreds of peasants, armed and armoured, and led by their lords in their war chariots, would fight and kill each other for weeks at a time.

The positive achievements of the new civilization were those of peace and trade—houses, fine clothing, wheeled vehicles, ships, mills and irrigating machinery; bread, beer and wine, architecture, painting, sculpture and drama; kings and courts, priests and temples. Here was laid the main framework of our way of living today. The mechanical age has given us enormously enlarged powers of production and transport, but as consumers we demand much the same things as men wanted six thousand years ago.

### THE LEGACY OF EARLY CIVILIZATION

Agriculture and early civilization transformed and added to the traditional heritage of the tribal hunting man, the peasant virtues of hard and unremitting work, of regular habits and attention to the successive tasks of the changing year. It profoundly changed the care-free attitude of the primitive savage, but with

peasant virtues there also appeared for the first time the acquisitiveness and meanness which are inconceivable in a tribal society. In the towns the craftsmen and traders developed the traditions of good workmanship and fair dealing, but, with it, a narrow sense of private property and vested interest. The new social values were never harmonized with the old; already the struggle inside the human mind between the earlier generous social impulse and the newer individual selfishness had begun.

### SOCIAL DISCORD AND THE BARBARIANS

The first brilliant development of civilization did not last because the element of social discord that it brought continually frustrated it. After about 3000 B.C. it was clear that improvements in life were slowing down, and indeed the same rate of development was probably not reached again until the seventeenth century of our own era. Civilization certainly spread outwards. The Mediterranean, India, China, soon came to rival Egypt and Mesopotamia. But the quality remained static, so much so that for most people living it became the eternal order of things. Periods of peace and prosperity alternated with periods of famine, civil strife and war. The poor were always being ground down and occasionally revolted, and around the fringe of civilization lay the barbarians.

These barbarians were originally simple peasants and herdsmen, but they were always being interfered with by their civilized neighbours who came into their lands first in search of gold and minerals, and then to trade for raw materials, giving them in return ornaments, weapons and drink, and teaching them the dangerous art of war. With unfailing regularity, when political strife in a civilized country reached a certain level, the weaker side would call in the barbarians as hard-fighting allies. Sooner or later they would come into residence, and take over the country itself. The result was that all over the civilized world governments became barbarized. The barbarian rulers might acquire the external features of civilization in dress and ornament and extravagance of life, but they retained their tradition of barbarian values.

The result was to confuse still further our traditional inheritance, particularly since barbarian values, which compound the acquisitiveness of the merchant and the violence of the

tribesman, were never common values but were limited to the ruling classes with which the barbarians merged. Most written history is a record of the working out of the pride, greed and violence of the barbarian rulers and aristocracies. We see these even today in the habits of the Nazis. The tradition of the common people was also profoundly modified by barbarian rule. Each injustice and loss of freedom combined with old superstition into an attitude of profound acceptance and resignation to the will of God, as exemplified in the social structure. Religion was always for the common people, and aristocrats were above it.

### THE SPREAD OF CIVILIZATION

The process of interaction between civilized and peasant communities just sketched is one which occupies the greater part of recorded history. Through its agency civilization gradually spread over the surface of the world, but it spread from its focus in the Near East in a characteristic, uneven way. At the outer fringe, among the barbarians, was a boundary of pioneers, merchants, miners and hunters, who linked the civilized world with the uncivilized. Next to them were the most active and at the same time the roughest and most violent civilized States, themselves partly barbarian and, in their aggressiveness, breaking out not only in further annexations over primitive peoples, but in reactions on the older civilized centres lying further in. In classical times, first Greece and then Rome had the character of a border State; later it was to be France, Holland, England, Russia and the United States of America. In the East, the continual revolutions of Chinese history mark the same type of spreading process from the Han valley to the Yang-tse-Kiang and beyond.

At the very centre there remained the old, original civilized States, losing first their initiative, then their independence and ultimately decaying back into a state of culture far lower than that of their own past or of their outer neighbours. This decay was already conspicuous in Egypt and Mesopotamia a thousand years before Christ. By the end of the Middle Ages it involved the whole of the Near East and most of the Mediterranean countries. In India and China it was arrested by the persistence of the original peasant cultivation of irrigated land.

## THE CULTURAL HERITAGE

The outward spread of civilization did not, however, leave it unchanged. The new centres of civilization were now consciously aware of the heritage they carried from the old. They developed their own culture on the basis of a set of ideas—political, religious and artistic—that they drew from the older civilization. Christianity, for example, was originally one of the mystery religions produced in the disturbed and tragic times of the break-up of the old Asiatic kingdoms by aggressive Greeks and Romans. It became later the State religion of a great but already decaying Roman Empire. As the only live part of classical culture, Christianity was taken over by the active barbarians, and though changed in the process, it gave a unity and a continuity to the dark ages that they otherwise would not have had. A variant of it, as Mohammedanism, had the same function for Africa and Western Asia.

Common to both Christendom and Islam as heirs of the classical civilization was a body of literature, philosophy and science, not very clearly differentiated, which had been elaborated, mostly from earlier sources, by the Greeks and which passed into the tradition of the learned classes all over the world. Extending even wider still was a set of purely practical recipes and trade practices—in agriculture, mining, metal working, weaving, pottery and architecture—which were handed down from master to apprentice from earliest times. The very structure of society itself was also a common heritage. As civilization spread it carried with it the same pattern recognizable through all its local variations. In the country there were landowners, usually nobles; in the towns, merchants and craftsmen. All lived on the food produced by the villagers, whether slaves, serfs or free peasants.

## THE MOVEMENTS OF HISTORY

Though civilization had established a pattern, it was by no means a static one. The balance of importance of different classes and groups in the civilized world was continuously changing. In certain areas and for certain times merchant republics might be dominant. These merchant republics always proved unstable. Based upon organized greed, they inevitably oppressed their labourers and other poorer citizens, while their



wealth invited looting by their more vigorous and less developed neighbours. The greatest flourishing of such merchant republics was the federation we call the Roman Empire. This broke down, not so much from external attack, as on account of the ruthless exploitation of the people, as slaves or poor villagers, by the owning classes.

After the collapse of merchant republics usually came the turn of the rule of the landed aristocrat, what we call the feudal system. This was more primitive in material culture, the land being broken up into innumerable domains with peasants unable to do more than maintain themselves in poverty and their lords and their fighting men in hearty well-being. Feudalism was not confined to Western Europe; at different times it flourished in the Near East, India and China. But it, too, was an unstable State, dependent for its existence on continual warfare. As long as war was the rule, the poverty and uncertainty necessary for the feudal system remained, but once a particular lord was more successful than his rivals and established some form of peace for his own profit, the merchants and townsmen began again to flourish. And as soon as the lords felt the advantages of the money that these provided, they came into the merchants' power and lost their own which was based on land and arms.

The perpetual warfare and social struggles, the change of dynasties and republics, might seem to have been the normal lot of humanity, and it was certainly so seen by the men who lived in these times. But the outward movement of civilization itself ensured that this process could not maintain itself in such ceaseless revolutions without at some point engendering fundamental changes. As civilization spread it passed into new lands and the conditions in these new lands were fundamentally different from those of the lands of its origin. In the first place, civilization left the broad, irrigated, river valleys that ensured the density of population that made possible its first flourishing. It was impossible in the poorer lands of northern Europe to produce wealth for the lords simply by the patient labour of thousands of serfs or slaves. The desire for wealth was there and new means had to be found to achieve it. It was not until the barbarian and later the feudal states that succeeded the Roman Empire had finally settled and achieved some degree of peace and mercantile prosperity that this change could take place. That it took place

in Western Europe and not in any other part of the world was largely a geographical accident. The nearest competitor was China, but it was some centuries behind.

### THE DAWN OF THE NEW AGE

In ordinary history we read of the changes that took place in Western Europe as the Renaissance, the Reformation and the Industrial Revolution. But these were merely outer forms of a vast and critical transformation in human affairs. Not until recently have we been able to glimpse at the obscure and patient movements that led up to these changes. Steadily through the Dark and Middle Ages, technique was improving to meet the harder demands of cultivation in the poorer lands of Europe. The invention of the horse-collar threw open to the plough millions of acres of rolling country. The miners developed wooden pumps to tap the deeper veins of ore, and spread their activities into the wild mountains of the Ertz-gebirge and the Carpathians. The shipwrights introduced the rudder and the practice of sailing into the wind, and turned the compass, which was borrowed from the Chinese, to good purpose in crossing open sea. Two other borrowings from China were equally important—gunpowder, which gave its users, backed by the metal industry, an immediate military superiority; and paper and printing, which spread literary culture, personal religion and political consciousness among the whole of the mercantile classes.

The technical basis for a revolution was there; the economic impetus came from the new growth of the merchant classes following the decay of feudalism. The initial success which started the revolution with an impetus which it never lost was one of adventure and robbery. The new armed ships seeking cheaper luxury goods were soon dominating Eastern Asia and almost accidentally discovered the practically unexploited regions of the Americas. Now there was wealth to be had for all who could take it, but to take wealth, hands were needed and hands were scarce. Every effort was made to supply these hands in old-fashioned ways. The Indians of the West Indies were enslaved, but they inconsiderately died. The slave trade was revived and thousands of negroes, and white men too, shipped to the new plantations, but there were never enough; more things had to be done with less men.

## THE BIRTH OF CAPITALISM

The need was urgent; the economic organization and the technical basis was already there to satisfy the need. The accumulation of money that had been made through trade and exploitation could be used, not as in past times, merely in buying up land and forming the basis for a new feudal system, but also for the new processes of manufacture, the organized production of goods by men working for wages. This system we now know as Capitalism. In itself it was not anything radically new. What was new was the improvement of manufacture through the development, first of machines in which complex processes could be carried out with fewer hands, and then of engines which met the need for heavy work better than animals, wind or water. To invent machinery did not require in itself any superlative human ingenuity, but it did require, in its very first stages, that a special advantage should be gained by saving of labour, and this could only occur in a civilization in which labour was a scarce commodity. Hence it came that in Western Europe and the new colonies human ingenuity was turned more and more consciously in the direction of mechanical invention.

## TECHNICS AND SCIENCE

Yet the process was far more than one of technical change. It has always been characteristic of the craftsman that he advances in small stages, adopting new processes only if the old ones have proved unworkable or unprofitable. To advance more rapidly it is not sufficient to know that if certain practices are followed they will yield satisfactory results. To know what big changes can be made safely or advantageously it is necessary to go further and to find out what the old practices were based on. Knowledge of the behaviour of matter and natural forces is an essential prerequisite to big technical changes. But the very circumstances which led to the demand for new techniques also provided the opportunities and the incentive for acquiring this knowledge.

The first successes of the new techniques, particularly in navigation in the discovery of the New Worlds, broke down reliance on traditional knowledge which was also being heavily shaken in the social sphere because of its association with the feudal pattern of economy. A by-product of the literary

and theological interest of the Renaissance and the Reformation was the interest in the world of nature and even more in the world of art, including, for the first time since before the days of Greece and Rome, the practical arts as well as the fine arts. Modern science was the result of this renewed interest, spurred forward by the need for technical development. The earliest scientists were naturally most conscious of this connection. The works of Leonardo, Galileo, Bacon, Boyle and even of Newton are full of their consciousness of the fundamental utility as well as of the beauty of science. That connection was largely lost by the nineteenth century. We are beginning to re-discover it now.

### THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

Once new techniques based on new knowledge securely established themselves, the process of further development became automatic and increasingly rapid. The profits of industry led to further accumulations of capital, to further investment and to a more rapid spate of inventions and discovery. The critical period for the transformation was at the beginning. Early machinery was necessarily highly inefficient and cumbersome, and it had to compete with a craftsmanship perfected after many centuries of natural selection. It was only when a process such as spinning or weaving could be done by the early crude machines many times more cheaply than it could be done by hand that there was any chance of introducing it; but once introduced the new methods improved while the old stood still and rapidly broke up the framework of the older society. The craftsmen and the peasant ceased to be independent self-sufficing producers. Nearly all the former and many of the latter were swept into the factories; the remainder grew cash crops for the market they could not control.

Paradoxically, the movement that started from a shortage of labour provided very soon a far greater labour force than had even existed before. The human race, that had maintained a static population for many centuries, suddenly began to multiply to fill the new factories and to produce food from the new lands. The new population in turn raised new demands which only mechanized industry and agriculture could provide. Increase and improvement seemed self-perpetuating. Indefinite Progress became an axiom, and Progress implied free trade and capitalism with its trinity of rent, interest and, above all, profit.



## THE SECOND HUMAN TRANSFORMATION

The scientific industrial transformation is the second great change since the origin of humanity. Mankind, properly speaking, came into existence when, through society, men were able to exploit nature collectively; but though then they could do more together than they could separately, mankind collectively could at first only live on the available surplus that wild nature produced. The first major change was the introduction of agriculture. Now man controlling through his understanding certain plants and animals, was able by his crops and herds to secure a more thorough exploitation of the primary resources of land and water. Still, for the greater part, motive power came from human or animal muscle, and materials were drawn without fundamental alteration from the earth, plants and animals. The agricultural stage was essentially a socially organized control of biological environment. The second change ushered in by the scientific or mechanical revolution went one step further—the control and exploitation of inorganic natural forces and materials. It implies an understanding of a different character than any required before. The understanding necessary for the first stage was essentially social and human, embodied in tradition, ritual and magic. For the second agricultural stage, much more was needed—a knowledge of the growth and reproduction of plants and animals, of the properties of wood and stone and fibre and clay and even of the artificial metals. But once gained, it could be passed on as traditional craft knowledge.

The third stage makes far greater demands on human understanding, and these are not limited but progressively increase as the scale of exploitation of natural powers increases. Here rational and scientific analysis takes the place of traditional thought. Thus the second transformation is a transformation of human mind and human society no less than of the material basis of life. The social implications of the birth of science and of the industrial revolution made themselves felt from the very start of these changes, but they were not consciously understood until the work of Marx and Engels. It took a long time for the ruling classes, even though they had grown rich as a result of these changes, to recognize their existence; and when they were at last in the nineteenth century forced to recognize them, they

treated the changes as due to some particularly providential progress which had also the value of increasing their own wealth and importance. Modern civilization, with its steam engines and telegraphs, was felt to be inseparable from factory owners and stock exchanges. They went even further and considered this entirely novel and fundamentally transformed society as being the natural order of man: that the use of it had been denied the past ages because of their ignorance, not of the technical basis of modern society, but of its economic and social forms—free trade and joint stock companies.

### SCIENCE AND CAPITALISM

People are now much less likely to accept the modern world as a natural order of things; progress, in the old sense, has so clearly broken down. But in their rejection many still confuse the technical and scientific with the economic and political factors. Because the situation is intolerable, they blame science itself and the techniques that provide the forms of destruction and misery rather than the social factors which have led science and technique to be used in that particular way. Now just because the difficult birth and the struggling youth of the scientific and technical conquest of material environment occurred—and could only occur—under conditions of capitalism, it does not at all follow that capitalism is necessarily and permanently associated with these transformations.

In fact, we have already a large-scale demonstration that this is not the case. The technical, the organizational and now even more the military failures of the leading purely capitalist States stand in sharp contrast to the successes of the socialist organization of the Soviet Union. The reasons for the failure of capitalism to live up to its early promise were mercilessly laid bare by Marx at the very hey-day of capitalist enterprise in the middle of the nineteenth century. It was the social failure of capitalism, which in turn depended on its economic organization, that in the end destroyed the value of its technical achievements. The vast new population, which was almost brought into existence by the Industrial Revolution, was not a population which enjoyed more than a minimum of the benefits of that revolution, the minimum necessary to keep them alive and at work. The vast majority of the population of the world became either wage

workers in industrial countries or virtual serfs producing raw materials from the land and mines of colonial countries. Even though in favoured countries such as the United States there remained until recent times the possibility of the abler of the workers themselves to become capitalists, these were a minute fraction of the population; the remainder could not participate to a sufficient extent in the benefits of that increased production to prevent the fluctuating and ultimately chronic state of over-production with its attendant crises, unemployment, emigration and ultimately war. Capitalism was like the wizard's apprentice in the fairy story who knew the spell to make the spirits work but could not stop them. Today, even in the most developed capitalist countries of Britain and the United States, it is clear that the traditional forms of production for private profit are serious hindrances which must be largely abandoned if the war is to be carried on effectively.

#### THE DECAY OF CAPITALISM

Long before the war started, however, the form that capitalism was taking was holding up rather than advancing progress. Already, towards the end of the last century, free trade capitalism was passing into imperialism. Backward countries were no longer merely markets for textiles and fancy goods: they were fields for investment in railways, mining and factory equipment, to be worked by cheap native labour in order to bring profits to fewer and bigger companies at home. These companies were becoming more and more identified with the governments which supported them and which annexed to their empires the territories on which the companies operated. But once the whole world was divided up between the rival empires, even that possibility of capitalist expansion came to an end.

The characteristic features of capitalism in the last thirty years have accordingly been monopoly and restriction. Trusts, cartels, price fixing arrangements have been made among firms, not so much to get vastly increased profits, as to preserve profits even for inefficient firms, in a dwindling market, by limiting production. In the last stages since the great crisis of 1930, capitalists even went so far as to destroy, not only the products of agriculture, but also the very industrial means of production.

Companies were formed, not to spin more cotton or build more ships, but to destroy cotton spindles and 'sterilize', as they called it, the shipyards. This policy, in those countries where it was most practised, as in England, went further and destroyed the bases of human economy; they produced an attitude of mind that was fatal to any constructive effort. The emphasis was all on caution, soundness and conservation; on the tacit acceptance of the diminishing scale of effort. Unemployment, partially palliated by doles, was tolerated as the natural state of affairs. Stupid and unenterprising men ruled a people they had made docile and hopeless. Their attitude, which infected the whole of society, laid emphasis on the need to preserve static conditions rather than to promote action. Trade Union and Labour leaders abandoned any hope of power or even of radical improvement and concentrated instead on preventing any movement that would endanger the position of restrictive monopoly capitalism. Anything, they felt, would be better than violent change which working class privileges or their own positions might be lost.

#### FASCISM, WAR AND REVOLUTION

Violent change, however, was the one thing that could not ultimately be avoided, whatever efforts were made to put it off. Where revolution could not be dared, Fascism and war took place. The rise of Fascism was simply the counterpart in less prosperous countries of the static pluto-democracy of the more prosperous ones. Where, for the lack of colonial territories and credit resources, the proportion of goods that could be spared to the working class was so low that even the most docile must re-act, a new and violent way had to be found to save capitalist forms. Fascism achieved this in two inseparably linked ways—repression within and aggression abroad. In making armaments the main problem of unemployment could be met. By using those armaments in war, the populations of other countries could be robbed of enough to support the aggressors. By a State organization, capitalist enterprise could be shown that there are ways of profit other than by restriction while the whole apparatus of party brutality and police spying could carry out the necessary task of suppressing conscious working class elements. By the beginning of the 1930's capitalis-



had no way out but Fascism and war, and it was merely a question of how far Fascism would spread before war broke out.

## SOCIALISM

But although capitalism is producing its own destruction through its very success in mastering material environment, it has also provided its own successor in social organization. There is no need to lose the advantages that capitalism has brought to humanity. In fact, the way in which those advantages can be fully realized is indicated in the development of capitalism itself. Marx characterized capitalism as an increasing organization and socialization of the *mode* of production unaccompanied by the socialization of the products of industry. After Marx's time, the degree of organization of production has increased enormously and it is now apparent to most intelligent people in the world that this organization could be used effectively for general benefit if we could solve the purely human and social problems involved in the transition from the vested interests of the few to the common interests of all.

The problems involved are no longer technical but political and economic. There is no need to abandon the slightest advantage of scientific and engineering skill or of organizational ability. True, we are only just beginning to effect the mental transformation that has accompanied all the large human transformations in the past. The first stage in this transformation was the realization—of which Bacon was the greatest spokesman—of the immense new powers which science could give humanity. The stage we are reaching now is the realization that those powers will be of no use to humanity unless the whole of human effort on a world scale is consciously organized and integrated. We see that particular solutions, where they are in the hands of a class or an imperial State, are worse than useless.

This consciousness of a collective human task is as important on the mental side as technical achievements are on the physical. One might have been imagined that it would come most easily to those who had been directing technical and economic development. But this, in fact, could not be because of the very nature of capitalist organization. The directors of industry were necessarily at war individually with each other and collectively with the large mass of wage earners. They were forced to deny, first of all to the

population at large and ultimately to themselves, the knowledge of the need for conscious, co-operative utilization of natural resources. Their failure in the last few years, exemplified on the one side in the fall of France and on the other by the perverted capitalism of Germany, shows that this self-deception was itself a prelude to general incapacity. The real consciousness of effective human unity could only arise on the other side, in the working classes to whose immediate as well as ultimate advantage such unity lay. Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin were among the leaders of those who analysed this, stated it clearly and realized it in practice. Their work has the validity that it has because of its inherent applicability to the present state of human development so that millions of those who cannot understand the complexities of economics or have had no chance to study the history of civilization are beginning to see what has to be done and are set about doing it.

#### THE SOVIET UNION

Some have done more than begin to see it. In the Soviet Union for the past twenty-five years the working-class has begun the building up of the new civilization. The task was difficult and bloody from its outset, hampered in every way by the interference of outside capitalist States, by the stupid greed and superstitions of internal elements attached to old forms of living and, finally, by the murderous attack of the Nazis. The common people all over the world are beginning to see in this last phase what only a few of them were able to see before, through the mist of lies and belittlement spread about the Soviet Union. They see its enormous material strength, its capacity alone among democratic nations to withstand the full fury of a nation trained first and last for arms and having behind it the industrial strength of the whole of western Europe. But they see more: they are realizing that the material strength of the Soviet Union is an expression of the strength of the people themselves, a new people made by a new society.

#### THE COMMUNIST PARTY

The establishment and building up of the Soviet Union was no accidental or purely Russian phenomenon. It was the logical outcome of the workers' movement of liberation from the



injustices and restrictions of capitalism. Marx and Engels had given the movement consciousness and direction. Lenin, after decades of revolutionary activity, was to lead it to its final triumph in Russia. The weapon he forged and led was the Communist Party, the Bolsheviks. The Communist Party, although it derived from both, was not a political Party in the old sense, nor was it a revolutionary junta like the Roundheads, the Jacobins or the Fenians. It was a new type of organization suited to the conditions of transition to the new form of society. It had discipline, unity and earnestness of purpose, but it imposed the obligation on its members to combine their practice with understanding and learning. Every Communist knows that he cannot be effective unless he understands the historic process of which he is one part and unless he tests the validity of that understanding in his actual daily work. It is no question of applying mechanically the texts of Marx or Lenin, but of learning from the people what is their applicability and how they must be developed. The Party ensures the purposeful, determined and resourceful co-operative action that has been so well shown throughout the history of the Soviet Union, never more than now, and shown as well in China, Spain and many another oppressed country. The Party does not stand as a hand-picked élite responsible to an autocratic Führer over a cowed and apathetic populace, it is the devoted, conscious element of the people themselves.

What has been effected in the Soviet Union is more than the building up of a Socialist economy. In winning and defending it, the many peoples of the Union have found themselves; they have renewed hope and initiative in life. The contrast of the old and new life is nowhere more clearly seen than in the once backward peoples of the Union. Following the National policy initiated by Stalin, they kept and fostered their traditional culture but built up at the same time a fully modern and scientific industry and agriculture. The result has been to create eager and progressive peoples fully capable of defending themselves against any aggressor. The war has taught us that where populations lack that effective self-reliance, as in Malaya and Burma, the task of defence is practically impossible. Along the path already blazed in Soviet Asia and China lies the sane and democratic way of solving, in a few years, all our racial and colonial problems.

## SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

Transformations of a fundamental kind, though they may take years and even centuries to prepare for, come, when they are ripe, with startling speed. Changing societies are full of violence and apparent cruelty: the cruelty that unhesitatingly sweeps aside all the sentiments of people who for one reason or another cannot adapt themselves to the rate of change. But they are also periods of vast enterprise and growth of human stature; they create men of ability; they liberate thought; they enable great works to be carried out; internally the whole individual pattern of life is changed; the goal of human hopes is no longer individual domestic wealth and security but accepted collaboration in an active, working and developing community.

Historians used to refer to the change from feudalism to capitalism as one from status to contract, a change from an economy where one knew one's place to one where one paid one's way. This change is now being reversed, but in a dialectic way. Contract is returning not to status but to function. What a man does in his right place with other men is his wealth. The new Socialist State will have to combine together integral organization and democratic initiative. These are not irreconcilable opposites. Soviet experience shows this every day. Nowhere is there such initiative and improvisation; nowhere have isolated groups proved themselves more capable of finding out the path to action for themselves. Nevertheless they are all sustained by a common purpose and work together to a common plan.

The period of rapid change is now working up to its greatest speed and violence all over the world. Countries are taken over in a night; empires crumble in weeks. The social system of centuries has now become an artificial shell which is only restricting the capabilities of the human forces inside it. However varied are the fortunes of war, one thing is lost for ever—the old world. The second great transformation of humanity is visibly under way.

*(To be concluded)*